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Bouvard and Pecuchet (Large Print)

(Gustave Flaubert Masterpiece Collection)

Gustave Flaubert

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Bouvard and Pecuchet

Gustave Flaubert

CHAPTER I.

Kindred Souls.

As there were thirty-three degrees of heat the Boulevard Bourdon was absolutely deserted.

Farther down, the Canal St. Martin, confined by two locks, showed in a straight line its water black as ink. In the middle of it was a boat, filled with timber, and on the bank were two rows of casks.

Beyond the canal, between the houses which separated the timber-yards, the great pure sky was cut up into plates of ultramarine; and under the reverberating light of the sun, the white façades, the slate roofs, and the granite wharves glowed dazzlingly. In the distance arose a confused noise in the warm atmosphere; and the idleness of Sunday, as well as the melancholy engendered by the summer heat, seemed to shed around a universal languor.

Two men made their appearance.

One came from the direction of the Bastille; the other from that of the Jardin des Plantes. The taller of the pair, arrayed in linen cloth, walked with his hat back, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his cravat in his hand. The smaller, whose form was covered with a maroon frock-coat, wore a cap with a pointed peak.

As soon as they reached the middle of the boulevard, they sat down, at the same moment, on the same seat.

In order to wipe their foreheads they took off their headgear, each placing his beside himself; and the little man saw "Bouvard" written in

his neighbour's hat, while the latter easily traced "Pécuchet" in the cap of the person who wore the frock-coat.

"Look here!" he said; "we have both had the same idea—to write our names in our head-coverings!"

"Yes, faith, for they might carry off mine from my desk."

"'Tis the same way with me. I am an employé."

Then they gazed at each other. Bouvard's agreeable visage quite charmed Pécuchet.

His blue eyes, always half-closed, smiled in his fresh-coloured face. His trousers, with big flaps, which creased at the end over beaver shoes, took the shape of his stomach, and made his shirt bulge out at the waist; and his fair hair, which of its own accord grew in tiny curls, gave him a somewhat childish look.

He kept whistling continually with the tips of his lips.

Bouvard was struck by the serious air of Pécuchet. One would have thought that he wore a wig, so flat and black were the locks which adorned his high skull. His face seemed entirely in profile, on account of his nose, which descended very low. His legs, confined in tight wrappings of lasting, were entirely out of proportion with the length of his bust. His voice was loud and hollow.

This exclamation escaped him:

"How pleasant it would be in the country!"

But, according to Bouvard, the suburbs were unendurable on account of the noise of the public-houses outside the city. Pécuchet was of the same opinion. Nevertheless, he was beginning to feel tired of the capital, and so was Bouvard.

And their eyes wandered over heaps of stones for building, over the hideous water in which a truss of straw was floating, over a factory chimney rising towards the horizon. Sewers sent forth their poisonous exhalations. They turned to the opposite side; and they had in front of them the walls of the Public Granary.

Decidedly (and Pécuchet was surprised at the fact), it was still warmer in the street than in his own house. Bouvard persuaded him to put down his overcoat. As for him, he laughed at what people might say about him.

Suddenly, a drunken man staggered along the footpath; and the pair began a political discussion on the subject of working-men. Their opinions were similar, though perhaps Bouvard was rather more liberal in his views.

A noise of wheels sounded on the pavement amid a whirlpool of dust. It turned out to be three hired carriages which were going towards Bercy, carrying a bride with her bouquet, citizens in white cravats, ladies with their petticoats huddled up so as almost to touch their armpits, two or three little girls, and a student.

The sight of this wedding-party led Bouvard and Pécuchet to talk about women, whom they declared to be frivolous, waspish, obstinate. In spite of this, they were often better than men; but at other times they were worse. In short, it was better to live without them. For his part, Pécuchet was a bachelor.

"As for me, I'm a widower," said Bouvard, "and I have no children."

"Perhaps you are lucky there. But, in the long run, solitude is very sad."

Then, on the edge of the wharf, appeared a girl of the town with a soldier,—sallow, with black hair, and marked with smallpox. She leaned on the soldier's arm, dragging her feet along, and swaying on her hips.

When she was a short distance from them, Bouvard indulged in a coarse remark. Pécuchet became very red in the face, and, no doubt to avoid answering, gave him a look to indicate the fact that a priest was coming in their direction.

The ecclesiastic slowly descended the avenue, along which lean elm trees were placed as landmarks, and Bouvard, when he no longer saw the priest's three-cornered head-piece, expressed his relief; for he hated Jesuits. Pécuchet, without absolving them from blame, exhibited some respect for religion.

Meanwhile, the twilight was falling, and the window-blinds in front of them were raised. The passers-by became more numerous. Seven o'clock struck.

Their words rushed on in an inexhaustible stream; remarks succeeding to anecdotes, philosophic views to individual considerations. They disparaged the management of the bridges and causeways, the tobacco

administration, the theatres, our marine, and the entire human race, like people who had undergone great mortifications. In listening to each other both found again some ideas which had long since slipped out of their minds; and though they had passed the age of simple emotions, they experienced a new pleasure, a kind of expansion, the tender charm associated with their first appearance on life's stage.

Twenty times they had risen and sat down again, and had proceeded along the boulevard from the upper to the lower lock, each time intending to take their departure, but not having the strength to do so, held back by a kind of fascination.

However, they came to parting at last, and they had clasped each other's hands, when Bouvard said all of a sudden:

"Faith! what do you say to our dining together?"

"I had the very same idea in my own head," returned Pécuchet, "but I hadn't the courage to propose it to you."

And he allowed himself to be led towards a little restaurant facing the Hôtel de Ville, where they would be comfortable.

Bouvard called for the *menu*. Pécuchet was afraid of spices, as they might inflame his blood. This led to a medical discussion. Then they glorified the utility of science: how many things could be learned, how many researches one could make, if one had only time! Alas! earning one's bread took up all one's time; and they raised their arms in astonishment, and were near embracing each other over the table on discovering that they were both copyists, Bouvard in a commercial establishment, and Pécuchet in the Admiralty, which did not, however, prevent him from devoting a few spare moments each evening to study. He had noted faults in M. Thiers's work, and he spoke with the utmost respect of a certain professor named Dumouchel.

Bouvard had the advantage of him in other ways. His hair watch-chain, and his manner of whipping-up the mustard-sauce, revealed the greybeard, full of experience; and he ate with the corners of his napkin under his armpits, giving utterance to things which made Pécuchet laugh. It was a peculiar laugh, one very low note, always the same, emitted at long intervals. Bouvard's laugh was explosive, sonorous,

uncovering his teeth, shaking his shoulders, and making the customers at the door turn round to stare at him.

When they had dined they went to take coffee in another establishment. Pécuchet, on contemplating the gas-burners, groaned over the spreading torrent of luxury; then, with an imperious movement, he flung aside the newspapers. Bouvard was more indulgent on this point. He liked all authors indiscriminately, having been disposed in his youth to go on the stage.

He had a fancy for trying balancing feats with a billiard-cue and two ivory balls, such as Barberou, one of his friends, had performed. They invariably fell, and, rolling along the floor between people's legs, got lost in some distant corner. The waiter, who had to rise every time to search for them on all-fours under the benches, ended by making complaints. Pécuchet picked a quarrel with him; the coffee-house keeper came on the scene, but Pécuchet would listen to no excuses, and even cavilled over the amount consumed.

He then proposed to finish the evening quietly at his own abode, which was quite near, in the Rue St. Martin. As soon as they had entered he put on a kind of cotton nightgown, and did the honours of his apartment.

A deal desk, placed exactly in the centre of the room caused inconvenience by its sharp corners; and all around, on the boards, on the three chairs, on the old armchair, and in the corners, were scattered pell-mell a number of volumes of the "Roret Encyclopædia," "The Magnetiser's Manual," a Fénelon, and other old books, with heaps of waste paper, two cocoa-nuts, various medals, a Turkish cap, and shells brought back from Havre by Dumouchel. A layer of dust velveted the walls, which otherwise had been painted yellow. The shoe-brush was lying at the side of the bed, the coverings of which hung down. On the ceiling could be seen a big black stain, produced by the smoke of the lamp.

Bouvard, on account of the smell no doubt, asked permission to open the window.

"The papers will fly away!" cried Pécuchet, who was more afraid of the currents of air.

However, he panted for breath in this little room, heated since morning by the slates of the roof.

Bouvard said to him: "If I were in your place, I would remove my flannel."

"What!" And Pécuchet cast down his head, frightened at the idea of no longer having his healthful flannel waistcoat.

"Let me take the business in hand," resumed Bouvard; "the air from outside will refresh you."

At last Pécuchet put on his boots again, muttering, "Upon my honour, you are bewitching me." And, notwithstanding the distance, he accompanied Bouvard as far as the latter's house at the corner of the Rue de Béthune, opposite the Pont de la Tournelle.

Bouvard's room, the floor of which was well waxed, and which had curtains of cotton cambric and mahogany furniture, had the advantage of a balcony overlooking the river. The two principal ornaments were a liqueur-frame in the middle of the chest of drawers, and, in a row beside the glass, daguerreotypes representing his friends. An oil painting occupied the alcove.

"My uncle!" said Bouvard. And the taper which he held in his hand shed its light on the portrait of a gentleman.

Red whiskers enlarged his visage, which was surmounted by a forelock curling at its ends. His huge cravat, with the triple collar of his shirt, and his velvet waistcoat and black coat, appeared to cramp him. You would have imagined there were diamonds on his shirt-frill. His eyes seemed fastened to his cheekbones, and he smiled with a cunning little air.

Pécuchet could not keep from saying, "One would rather take him for your father!"

"He is my godfather," replied Bouvard carelessly, adding that his baptismal name was François-Denys-Bartholemée.

Pécuchet's baptismal name was Juste-Romain-Cyrille, and their ages were identical—forty-seven years. This coincidence caused them satisfaction, but surprised them, each having thought the other much older. They next vented their admiration for Providence, whose combinations are sometimes marvellous.

"For, in fact, if we had not gone out a while ago to take a walk we might have died before knowing each other."

And having given each other their employers' addresses, they exchanged a cordial "good night."

"Don't go to see the women!" cried Bouvard on the stairs.

Pécuchet descended the steps without answering this coarse jest.

Next day, in the space in front of the establishment of MM. Descambos Brothers, manufacturers of Alsatian tissues, , Rue Hautefeuille, a voice called out:

"Bouvard! Monsieur Bouvard!"

The latter glanced through the window-panes and recognised Pécuchet, who articulated more loudly:

"I am not ill! I have remained away!"

"Why, though?"

"This!" said Pécuchet, pointing at his breast.

All the talk of the day before, together with the temperature of the apartment and the labours of digestion, had prevented him from sleeping, so much so that, unable to stand it any longer, he had flung off his flannel waistcoat. In the morning he recalled his action, which fortunately had no serious consequences, and he came to inform Bouvard about it, showing him in this way that he had placed him very high in his esteem.

He was a small shopkeeper's son, and had no recollection of his mother, who died while he was very young. At fifteen he had been taken away from a boarding-school to be sent into the employment of a process-server. The gendarmes invaded his employer's residence one day, and that worthy was sent off to the galleys—a stern history which still caused him a thrill of terror. Then he had attempted many callings—apothecary's apprentice, usher, book-keeper in a packet-boat on the Upper Seine. At length, a head of a department in the Admiralty, smitten by his handwriting, had employed him as a copying-clerk; but the consciousness of a defective education, with the intellectual needs engendered by it, irritated his temper, and so he lived altogether alone, without relatives, without a mistress. His only distraction was to go out on Sunday to inspect public works.

The earliest recollections of Bouvard carried him back across the banks of the Loire into a farmyard. A man who was his uncle had brought him to Paris to teach him commerce. At his majority, he got a few thousand francs. Then he took a wife, and opened a confectioner's shop. Six months later his wife disappeared, carrying off the cash-box. Friends, good cheer, and above all, idleness, had speedily accomplished his ruin. But he was inspired by the notion of utilising his beautiful chirography, and for the past twelve years he had clung to the same post in the establishment of MM. Descambos Brothers, manufacturers of tissues, , Rue Hautefeuille. As for his uncle, who formerly had sent him the celebrated portrait as a memento, Bouvard did not even know his residence, and expected nothing more from him. Fifteen hundred francs a year and his salary as copying-clerk enabled him every evening to take a nap at a coffee-house. Thus their meeting had the importance of an adventure. They were at once drawn together by secret fibres. Besides, how can we explain sympathies? Why does a certain peculiarity, a certain imperfection, indifferent or hateful in one person, prove a fascination in another? That which we call the thunderbolt is true as regards all the passions.

Before the month was over they "thou'd" and "thee'd" each other.

Frequently they came to see each other at their respective offices. As soon as one made his appearance, the other shut up his writing-desk, and they went off together into the streets. Bouvard walked with long strides, whilst Pécuchet, taking innumerable steps, with his frock-coat flapping at his heels, seemed to slip along on rollers. In the same way, their peculiar tastes were in harmony. Bouvard smoked his pipe, loved cheese, regularly took his half-glass of brandy. Pécuchet snuffed, at dessert ate only preserves, and soaked a piece of sugar in his coffee. One was self-confident, flighty, generous; the other prudent, thoughtful, and thrifty.

In order to please him, Bouvard desired to introduce Pécuchet to Barberou. He was an ex-commercial traveller, and now a purse-maker—a good fellow, a patriot, a ladies' man, and one who affected the language of the faubourgs. Pécuchet did not care for him, and he brought Bouvard to the residence of Dumouchel. This author (for he had

published a little work on mnemonics) gave lessons in literature at a young ladies' boarding-school, and had orthodox opinions and a grave deportment. He bored Bouvard.

Neither of the two friends concealed his opinion from the other. Each recognised the correctness of the other's view. They altered their habits, they quitting their humdrum lodgings, and ended by dining together every day.

They made observations on the plays at the theatre, on the government, the dearness of living, and the frauds of commerce. From time to time, the history of Collier or the trial of Fualdès turned up in their conversations; and then they sought for the causes of the Revolution.

They lounged along by the old curiosity shops. They visited the School of Arts and Crafts, St. Denis, the Gobelins, the Invalides, and all the public collections.

When they were asked for their passports, they made pretence of having lost them, passing themselves off as two strangers, two Englishmen.

In the galleries of the Museum, they viewed the stuffed quadrupeds with amazement, the butterflies with delight, and the metals with indifference; the fossils made them dream; the conchological specimens bored them. They examined the hot-houses through the glass, and groaned at the thought that all these leaves distilled poisons. What they admired about the cedar was that it had been brought over in a hat.

At the Louvre they tried to get enthusiastic about Raphael. At the great library they desired to know the exact number of volumes.

On one occasion they attended at a lecture on Arabic at the College of France, and the professor was astonished to see these two unknown persons attempting to take notes. Thanks to Barberou, they penetrated into the green-room of a little theatre. Dumouchel got them tickets for a sitting at the Academy. They inquired about discoveries, read the prospectuses, and this curiosity developed their intelligence. At the end of a horizon, growing every day more remote, they perceived things at the same time confused and marvellous.

When they admired an old piece of furniture they regretted that they had not lived at the period when it was used, though they were absolutely ignorant of what period it was. In accordance with certain names, they imagined countries only the more beautiful in proportion to their utter lack of definite information about them. The works of which the titles were to them unintelligible, appeared to their minds to contain some mysterious knowledge.

And the more ideas they had, the more they suffered. When a mail-coach crossed them in the street, they felt the need of going off with it. The Quay of Flowers made them sigh for the country.

One Sunday they started for a walking tour early in the morning, and, passing through Meudon, Bellevue, Suresnes, and Auteuil, they wandered about all day amongst the vineyards, tore up wild poppies by the sides of fields, slept on the grass, drank milk, ate under the acacias in the gardens of country inns, and got home very late—dusty, worn-out, and enchanted.

They often renewed these walks. They felt so sad next day that they ended by depriving themselves of them.

The monotony of the desk became odious to them. Always the eraser and the sandarac, the same inkstand, the same pens, and the same companions. Looking on the latter as stupid fellows, they talked to them less and less. This cost them some annoyances. They came after the regular hour every day, and received reprimands.

Formerly they had been almost happy, but their occupation humiliated them since they had begun to set a higher value on themselves, and their disgust increased while they were mutually glorifying and spoiling each other. Pécuchet contracted Bouvard's bluntness, and Bouvard assumed a little of Pécuchet's moroseness.

"I have a mind to become a mountebank in the streets!" said one to the other.

"As well to be a rag-picker!" exclaimed his friend.

What an abominable situation! And no way out of it. Not even the hope of it!

One afternoon (it was the th of January,) Bouvard, while at his desk, received a letter left by the postman.

He lifted up both hands; then his head slowly fell back, and he sank on the floor in a swoon.

The clerks rushed forward; they took off his cravat; they sent for a physician. He re-opened his eyes; then, in answer to the questions they put to him:

"Ah! the fact is——the fact is——A little air will relieve me. No; let me alone. Kindly give me leave to go out."

And, in spite of his corpulence, he rushed, all breathless, to the Admiralty office, and asked for Pécuchet.

Pécuchet appeared.

"My uncle is dead! I am his heir!"

"It isn't possible!"

Bouvard showed him the following lines:

OFFICE OF MAÎTRE TARDIVEL, NOTARY.

Savigny-en-Septaine, th January, .

Sir,—I beg of you to call at my office in order to take notice there of the will of your natural father, M. François-Denys-Bartholomée Bouvard, ex-merchant in the town of Nantes, who died in this parish on the th of the present month. This will contains a very important disposition in your favour.

Tardivel, *Notary.*

Pécuchet was obliged to sit down on a boundary-stone in the courtyard outside the office.

Then he returned the paper, saying slowly:

"Provided that this is not—some practical joke."

"You think it is a farce!" replied Bouvard, in a stifled voice like the rattling in the throat of a dying man.

But the postmark, the name of the notary's office in printed characters, the notary's own signature, all proved the genuineness of the news; and they regarded each other with a trembling at the corners of their mouths and tears in their staring eyes.

They wanted space to breathe freely. They went to the Arc de Triomphe, came back by the water's edge, and passed beyond Nôtre

Dame. Bouvard was very flushed. He gave Pécuchet blows with his fist in the back, and for five minutes talked utter nonsense.

They chuckled in spite of themselves. This inheritance, surely, ought to mount up——?

"Ah! that would be too much of a good thing. Let's talk no more about it."

They did talk again about it. There was nothing to prevent them from immediately demanding explanations. Bouvard wrote to the notary with that view.

The notary sent a copy of the will, which ended thus:

"Consequently, I give to François-Denys-Bartholemée Bouvard, my recognised natural son, the portion of my property disposable by law."

The old fellow had got this son in his youthful days, but he had carefully kept it dark, making him pass for a nephew; and the "nephew" had always called him "my uncle," though he had his own idea on the matter. When he was about forty, M. Bouvard married; then he was left a widower. His two legitimate sons having gone against his wishes, remorse took possession of him for the desertion of his other child during a long period of years. He would have even sent for the lad but for the influence of his female cook. She left him, thanks to the manœuvres of the family, and in his isolation, when death drew nigh, he wished to repair the wrongs he had done by bequeathing to the fruit of his early love all that he could of his fortune. It ran up to half a million francs, thus giving the copying-clerk two hundred and fifty thousand francs. The eldest of the brothers, M. Étienne, had announced that he would respect the will.

Bouvard fell into a kind of stupefied condition. He kept repeating in a low tone, smiling with the peaceful smile of drunkards: "An income of fifteen thousand livres!"—and Pécuchet, whose head, however, was stronger, was not able to get over it.

They were rudely shaken by a letter from Tardivel. The other son, M. Alexandre, declared his intention to have the entire matter decided by law, and even to question the legacy, if he could, requiring, first of all, to have everything sealed, and to have an inventory taken and a sequestrator appointed, etc. Bouvard got a bilious attack in consequence.

Scarcely had he recovered when he started for Savigny, from which place he returned without having brought the matter nearer to a settlement, and he could only grumble about having gone to the expense of a journey for nothing. Then followed sleepless nights, alternations of rage and hope, of exaltation and despondency. Finally, after the lapse of six months, his lordship Alexandre was appeased, and Bouvard entered into possession of his inheritance.

His first exclamation was: "We will retire into the country!" And this phrase, which bound up his friend with his good fortune, Pécuchet had found quite natural. For the union of these two men was absolute and profound. But, as he did not wish to live at Bouvard's expense, he would not go before he got his retiring pension. Two years more; no matter! He remained inflexible, and the thing was decided.

In order to know where to settle down, they passed in review all the provinces. The north was fertile, but too cold; the south delightful, so far as the climate was concerned, but inconvenient because of the mosquitoes; and the middle portion of the country, in truth, had nothing about it to excite curiosity. Brittany would have suited them, were it not for the bigoted tendency of its inhabitants. As for the regions of the east, on account of the Germanic *patois* they could not dream of it. But there were other places. For instance, what about Forez, Bugey, and Rumois? The maps said nothing about them. Besides, whether their house happened to be in one place or in another, the important thing was to have one. Already they saw themselves in their shirt-sleeves, at the edge of a plat-band, pruning rose trees, and digging, dressing, settling the ground, growing tulips in pots. They would awaken at the singing of the lark to follow the plough; they would go with baskets to gather apples, would look on at butter-making, the thrashing of corn, sheep-shearing, bee-culture, and would feel delight in the lowing of cows and in the scent of new-mown hay. No more writing! No more heads of departments! No more even quarters' rent to pay! For they had a dwelling-house of their own! And they would eat the hens of their own poultry-yard, the vegetables of their own garden, and would dine without taking off their wooden shoes! "We'll do whatever we like! We'll let our beards grow!"

They would purchase horticultural implements, then a heap of things "that might perhaps be useful," such as a tool-chest (there was always need of one in a house), next, scales, a land-surveyor's chain, a bathing-tub in case they got ill, a thermometer, and even a barometer, "on the Gay-Lussac system," for physical experiences, if they took a fancy that way. It would not be a bad thing either (for a person cannot always be working out of doors), to have some good literary works; and they looked out for them, very embarrassed sometimes to know if such a book was really "a library book."

Bouvard settled the question. "Oh! we shall not want a library. Besides, I have my own."

They prepared their plans beforehand. Bouvard would bring his furniture, Pécuchet his big black table; they would turn the curtains to account; and, with a few kitchen utensils, this would be quite sufficient. They swore to keep silent about all this, but their faces spoke volumes. So their colleagues thought them funny. Bouvard, who wrote spread over his desk, with his elbows out, in order the better to round his letters, gave vent to a kind of whistle while half-closing his heavy eyelids with a waggish air. Pécuchet, squatted on a big straw foot-stool, was always carefully forming the pot-hooks of his large handwriting, but all the while swelling his nostrils and pressing his lips together, as if he were afraid of letting his secret slip.

After eighteen months of inquiries, they had discovered nothing. They made journeys in all the outskirts of Paris, both from Amiens to Evreux, and from Fontainebleau to Havre. They wanted a country place which would be a thorough country place, without exactly insisting on a picturesque site; but a limited horizon saddened them.

They fled from the vicinity of habitations, and only redoubled their solitude.

Sometimes they made up their minds; then, fearing they would repent later, they changed their opinion, the place having appeared unhealthy, or exposed to the sea-breeze, or too close to a factory, or difficult of access.

Barberou came to their rescue. He knew what their dream was, and one fine day he called on them to let them know that he had been told

about an estate at Chavignolles, between Caen and Falaise. This comprised a farm of thirty-eight hectares, with a kind of château, and a garden in a very productive state.

They proceeded to Calvados, and were quite enraptured. For the farm, together with the house (one would not be sold without the other), only a hundred and forty-three thousand francs were asked. Bouvard did not want to give more than a hundred and twenty thousand.

Pécuchet combated his obstinacy, begged of him to give way, and finally declared that he would make up the surplus himself. This was his entire fortune, coming from his mother's patrimony and his own savings. Never had he breathed a word, reserving this capital for a great occasion.

The entire amount was paid up about the end of , six months before his retirement.

Bouvard was no longer a copying-clerk. At first he had continued his functions through distrust of the future; but he had resigned once he was certain of his inheritance. However, he willingly went back to MM. Descambos; and the night before his departure he stood drinks to all the clerks.

Pécuchet, on the contrary, was morose towards his colleagues, and went off, on the last day, roughly clapping the door behind him.

He had to look after the packing, to do a heap of commissions, then to make purchases, and to take leave of Dumouchel.

The professor proposed to him an epistolary interchange between them, of which he would make use to keep Pécuchet well up in literature; and, after fresh felicitations, wished him good health.

Barberou exhibited more sensibility in taking leave of Bouvard. He expressly gave up a domino-party, promised to go to see him "over there," ordered two aniseed cordials, and embraced him.

Bouvard, when he got home, inhaled over the balcony a deep breath of air, saying to himself, "At last!" The lights along the quays quivered in the water, the rolling of omnibuses in the distance gradually ceased. He recalled happy days spent in this great city, supper-parties at restaurants, evenings at the theatre, gossips with his portress, all his habitual associations; and he experienced a sinking of the heart, a sadness which he dared not acknowledge even to himself.

Pécuchet was walking in his room up to two o'clock in the morning. He would come back there no more: so much the better! And yet, in order to leave behind something of himself, he printed his name on the plaster over the chimney-piece.

The larger portion of the baggage was gone since the night before. The garden implements, the bedsteads, the mattresses, the tables, the chairs, a cooking apparatus, and three casks of Burgundy would go by the Seine, as far as Havre, and would be despatched thence to Caen, where Bouvard, who would wait for them, would have them brought on to Chavignolles.

But his father's portrait, the armchairs the liqueur-case, the old books, the time-piece, all the precious objects were put into a furniture waggon, which would proceed through Nonancourt, Verneuil, and Falaise. Pécuchet was to accompany it.

He installed himself beside the conductor, upon a seat, and, wrapped up in his oldest frock-coat, with a comforter, mittens, and his office foot-warmer, on Sunday, the th of March, at daybreak, he set forth from the capital.

The movement and the novelty of the journey occupied his attention during the first few hours. Then the horses slackened their pace, which led to disputes between the conductor and the driver. They selected execrable inns, and, though they were accountable for everything, Pécuchet, through excess of prudence, slept in the same lodgings.

Next day they started again, at dawn, and the road, always the same, stretched out, uphill, to the verge of the horizon. Yards of stones came after each other; the ditches were full of water; the country showed itself in wide tracts of green, monotonous and cold; clouds scudded through the sky. From time to time there was a fall of rain. On the third day squalls arose. The awning of the waggon, badly fastened on, went clapping with the wind, like the sails of a ship. Pécuchet lowered his face under his cap, and every time he opened his snuff-box it was necessary for him, in order to protect his eyes, to turn round completely.

During the joltings he heard all his baggage swinging behind him, and shouted out a lot of directions. Seeing that they were useless, he changed his tactics. He assumed an air of good-fellowship, and made a display of

civilities; in the troublesome ascents he assisted the men in pushing on the wheels: he even went so far as to pay for the coffee and brandy after the meals. From that time they went on more slowly; so much so that, in the neighbourhood of Gauburge, the axletree broke, and the waggon remained tilted over. Pécuchet immediately went to inspect the inside of it: the sets of porcelain lay in bits. He raised his arms, while he gnashed his teeth, and cursed these two idiots; and the following day was lost owing to the waggon-driver getting tipsy: but he had not the energy to complain, the cup of bitterness being full.

Bouvard had quitted Paris only on the third day, as he had to dine once more with Barberou. He arrived in the coach-yard at the last moment; then he woke up before the cathedral of Rouen: he had mistaken the *diligence*.

In the evening, all the places for Caen were booked. Not knowing what to do, he went to the Theatre of Arts, and he smiled at his neighbours, telling them he had retired from business, and had lately purchased an estate in the neighbourhood. When he started on Friday for Caen, his packages were not there. He received them on Sunday, and despatched them in a cart, having given notice to the farmer who was working the land that he would follow in the course of a few hours.

At Falaise, on the ninth day of his journey, Pécuchet took a fresh horse, and even till sunset they kept steadily on. Beyond Bretteville, having left the high-road, he got off into a cross-road, fancying that every moment he could see the gable-ends of Chavignolles. However, the ruts hid them from view; they vanished, and then the party found themselves in the midst of ploughed fields. The night was falling. What was to become of them? At last Pécuchet left the waggon behind, and, splashing in the mire, advanced in front of it to reconnoitre. When he drew near farm-houses, the dogs barked. He called out as loudly as ever he could, asking what was the right road. There was no answer. He was afraid, and got back to the open ground. Suddenly two lanterns flashed. He perceived a cabriolet, and rushed forward to meet it. Bouvard was inside.

But where could the furniture waggon be? For an hour they called out to it through the darkness. At length it was found, and they arrived at Chavignolles.

A great fire of brushwood and pine-apples was blazing in the dining-room. Two covers were placed there. The furniture, which had come by the cart, was piled up near the vestibule. Nothing was wanting. They sat down to table.

Onion soup had been prepared for them, also a chicken, bacon, and hard-boiled eggs. The old woman who cooked came from time to time to inquire about their tastes. They replied, "Oh! very good, very good!" and the big loaf, hard to cut, the cream, the nuts, all delighted them. There were holes in the flooring, and the damp was oozing through the walls. However, they cast around them a glance of satisfaction, while eating on the little table on which a candle was burning. Their faces were reddened by the strong air. They stretched out their stomachs; they leaned on the backs of their chairs, which made a cracking sound in consequence, and they kept repeating: "Here we are in the place, then! What happiness! It seems to me that it is a dream!"

Although it was midnight, Pécuchet conceived the idea of taking a turn round the garden. Bouvard made no objection. They took up the candle, and, screening it with an old newspaper, walked along the paths. They found pleasure in mentioning aloud the names of the vegetables.

"Look here—carrots! Ah!—cabbages!"

Next, they inspected the espaliers. Pécuchet tried to discover the buds. Sometimes a spider would scamper suddenly over the wall, and the two shadows of their bodies appeared magnified, repeating their gestures. The ends of the grass let the dew trickle out. The night was perfectly black, and everything remained motionless in a profound silence, an infinite sweetness. In the distance a cock was crowing.

Their two rooms had between them a little door, which was hidden by the papering of the wall. By knocking a chest of drawers up against it, nails were shaken out; and they found the place gaping open. This was a surprise.

When they had undressed and got into bed, they kept babbling for some time. Then they went asleep—Bouvard on his back, with his

mouth open, his head bare; Pécuchet on his right side, his knees in his stomach, his head muffled in a cotton night-cap; and the pair snored under the moonlight which made its way in through the windows.

CHAPTER II.

Experiments in Agriculture.

How happy they felt when they awoke next morning! Bouvard smoked a pipe, and Pécuchet took a pinch of snuff, which they declared to be the best they had ever had in their whole lives. Then they went to the window to observe the landscape.

In front of them lay the fields, with a barn and the church-bell at the right and a screen of poplars at the left.

Two principal walks, forming a cross, divided the garden into four parts. The vegetables were contained in wide beds, where, at different spots, arose dwarf cypresses and trees cut in distaff fashion. On one side, an arbour just touched an artificial hillock; while, on the other, the espaliers were supported against a wall; and at the end, a railed opening gave a glimpse of the country outside. Beyond the wall there was an orchard, and, next to a hedge of elm trees, a thicket; and behind the railed opening there was a narrow road.

They were gazing on this spectacle together, when a man, with hair turning grey, and wearing a black overcoat, appeared walking along the pathway, striking with his cane all the bars of the railed fence. The old servant informed them that this was M. Vaucorbeil, a doctor of some reputation in the district. She mentioned that the other people of note were the Comte de Faverges, formerly a deputy, and an extensive owner of land and cattle; M. Foureau, who sold wood, plaster, all sorts of things; M. Marescot, the notary; the Abbé Jeufroy; and the widow Bordin, who lived on her private income. The old woman added that, as for herself, they called her Germaine, on account of the late Germain, her husband. She used to go out as a charwoman, but would be very glad

to enter into the gentlemen's service. They accepted her offer, and then went out to take a look at their farm, which was situated over a thousand yards away.

When they entered the farmyard, Maître Gouy, the farmer, was shouting at a servant-boy, while his wife, on a stool, kept pressed between her legs a turkey-hen, which she was stuffing with balls of flour.

The man had a low forehead, a thin nose, a downward look, and broad shoulders. The woman was very fair-haired, with her cheek-bones speckled with bran, and that air of simplicity which may be seen in the faces of peasants on the windows of churches.

In the kitchen, bundles of hemp hung from the ceiling. Three old guns stood in a row over the upper part of the chimney-piece. A dresser loaded with flowered crockery occupied the space in the middle of the wall; and the window-panes with their green bottle-glass threw over the tin and copper utensils a sickly lustre.

The two Parisians wished to inspect the property, which they had seen only once—and that a mere passing glance. Maître Gouy and his wife escorted them, and then began a litany of complaints.

All the appointments, from the carthouse to the boilery, stood in need of repair. It would be necessary to erect an additional store for the cheese, to put fresh iron on the railings, to raise the boundaries, to deepen the ponds, and to plant anew a considerable number of apple trees in the three enclosures.

Then they went to look at the lands under cultivation. Maître Gouy ran them down, saying that they ate up too much manure; cartage was expensive; it was impossible to get rid of stones; and the bad grass poisoned the meadows. This depreciation of his land lessened the pleasure experienced by Bouvard in walking over it.

They came back by the hollow path under an avenue of beech trees. On this side the house revealed its front and its courtyard. It was painted white, with a coating of yellow. The carthouse and the storehouse, the bakehouse and the woodshed, made, by means of a return, two lower wings. The kitchen communicated with a little hall. Next came the vestibule, a second hall larger than the other, and the drawing-room. The

four rooms on the first floor opened on the corridor facing the courtyard. Pécuchet selected one of them for his collections. The last was to be the library; and, on opening some of the presses, they found a few ancient volumes, but they had no fancy for reading the titles of them. The most urgent matter was the garden.

Bouvard, while passing close to the row of elm trees, discovered under their branches a plaster figure of a woman. With two fingers she held wide her petticoat, with her knees bent and her head over her shoulder, as if she were afraid of being surprised.

"I beg your pardon! Don't inconvenience yourself!"—and this pleasantry amused them so much that they kept repeating it twenty times a day for three months.

Meanwhile, the people of Chavignolles were desirous to make their acquaintance. Persons came to look at them through the railed fence. They stopped up the openings with boards. This thwarted the inhabitants. To protect himself from the sun Bouvard wore on his head a handkerchief, fastened so as to look like a turban. Pécuchet wore his cap, and he had a big apron with a pocket in front, in which a pair of pruning-shears, his silk handkerchief, and his snuff-box jostled against one another. Bare-armed, side by side, they dug, weeded, and pruned, imposing tasks on each other, and eating their meals as quickly as ever they could, taking care, however, to drink their coffee on the hillock, in order to enjoy the view.

If they happened to come across a snail, they pounced on it and crushed it, making grimaces with the corners of their mouths, as if they were cracking nuts. They never went out without their grafting implements, and they used to cut the worms in two with such force that the iron of the implement would sink three inches deep. To get rid of caterpillars, they struck the trees furiously with switches.

Bouvard planted a peony in the middle of the grass plot, and tomatoes so that they would hang down like chandeliers under the arch of the arbour.

Pécuchet had a large pit dug in front of the kitchen, and divided it into three parts, where he could manufacture composts which would grow a heap of things, whose detritus would again bring other crops, providing

in this way other manures to a limitless extent; and he fell into reveries on the edge of the pit, seeing in the future mountains of fruits, floods of flowers, and avalanches of vegetables. But the horse-dung, so necessary for the beds, was not to be had, inasmuch as the farmers did not sell it, and the innkeepers refused to supply it. At last, after many searches, in spite of the entreaties of Bouvard, and flinging aside all shamefacedness, he made up his mind to go for the dung himself.

It was in the midst of this occupation that Madame Bordin accosted him one day on the high-road. When she had complimented him, she inquired about his friend. This woman's black eyes, very small and very brilliant, her high complexion, and her assurance (she even had a little moustache) intimidated Pécuchet. He replied curtly, and turned his back on her—an impoliteness of which Bouvard disapproved.

Then the bad weather came on, with frost and snow. They installed themselves in the kitchen, and went in for trellis-work, or else kept going from one room to another, chatted by the chimney corner, or watched the rain coming down.

Since the middle of Lent they had awaited the approach of spring, and each morning repeated: "Everything is starting out!" But the season was late, and they consoled their impatience by saying: "Everything is going to start out!"

At length they were able to gather the green peas. The asparagus gave a good crop; and the vine was promising.

Since they were able to work together at gardening, they must needs succeed at agriculture; and they were seized with an ambition to cultivate the farm. With common sense and study of the subject, they would get through it beyond a doubt.

But they should first see how others carried on operations, and so they drew up a letter in which they begged of M. de Faverges to do them the honour of allowing them to visit the lands which he cultivated.

The count made an appointment immediately to meet them.

After an hour's walking, they reached the side of a hill overlooking the valley of the Orne. The river wound its way to the bottom of the valley. Blocks of red sandstone stood here and there, and in the distance larger masses of stone formed, as it were, a cliff overhanging fields of ripe

corn. On the opposite hill the verdure was so abundant that it hid the house from view. Trees divided it into unequal squares, outlining themselves amid the grass by more sombre lines.

Suddenly the entire estate came into view. The tiled roofs showed where the farm stood. To the right rose the château with its white façade, and beyond it was a wood. A lawn descended to the river, into which a row of plane trees cast their shadows.

The two friends entered a field of lucern, which people were spreading. Women wearing straw hats, with cotton handkerchiefs round their heads, and paper shades, were lifting with rakes the hay which lay on the ground, while at the end of the plain, near the stacks, bundles were being rapidly flung into a long cart, yoked to three horses.

The count advanced, followed by his manager. He was dressed in dimity; and his stiff figure and mutton-chop whiskers gave him at the same time the air of a magistrate and a dandy. Even when he was speaking, his features did not appear to move.

As soon as they had exchanged some opening courtesies, he explained his system with regard to fodder: the swathes should be turned without scattering them; the ricks should be conical, and the bundles made immediately on the spot, and then piled together by tens. As for the English rake, the meadow was too uneven for such an implement.

A little girl, with her stockingless feet in old shoes, and showing her skin through the rents in her dress, was supplying the women with cider, which she poured out of a jug supported against her hip. The count asked where this child came from, but nobody could tell. The women who were making the hay had picked her up to wait on them during the harvesting. He shrugged his shoulders, and just as he was moving away from the spot, he gave vent to some complaints as to the immorality of our country districts.

Bouvard eulogised his lucern field.

It was fairly good, in spite of the ravages of the *cuscute*.

The future agriculturists opened their eyes wide at the word "cuscute."

On account of the number of his cattle, he resorted to artificial meadowing; besides, it went well before the other crops—a thing that did not always happen in the case of fodder.

"This at least appears to me incontestable."

"Oh! incontestable," replied Bouvard and Pécuchet in one breath. They were on the borders of a field which had been carefully thinned. A horse, which was being led by hand, was dragging along a large box, mounted on three wheels. Seven ploughshares below were opening in parallel lines small furrows, in which the grain fell through pipes descending to the ground.

"Here," said the count, "I sow turnips. The turnip is the basis of my quadrennial system of cultivation."

And he was proceeding to deliver a lecture on the drill-plough when a servant came to look for him, and told him that he was wanted at the château.

His manager took his place—a man with a forbidding countenance and obsequious manners.

He conducted "these gentlemen" to another field, where fourteen harvesters, with bare breasts and legs apart, were cutting down rye. The steels whistled in the chaff, which came pouring straight down. Each of them described in front of him a large semicircle, and, all in a line, they advanced at the same time. The two Parisians admired their arms, and felt smitten with an almost religious veneration for the opulence of the soil. Then they proceeded to inspect some of the ploughed lands. The twilight was falling, and the crows swooped down into the ridges.

As they proceeded they met a flock of sheep pasturing here and there, and they could hear their continual browsing. The shepherd, seated on the stump of a tree, was knitting a woollen stocking, with his dog beside him.

The manager assisted Bouvard and Pécuchet to jump over a wooden fence, and they passed close to two orchards, where cows were ruminating under the apple trees.

All the farm-buildings were contiguous and occupied the three sides of the yard. Work was carried on there mechanically by means of a turbine moved by a stream which had been turned aside for the purpose. Leathern bands stretched from one roof to the other, and in the midst of dung an iron pump performed its operations.

The manager drew their attention to little openings in the sheepfolds nearly on a level with the floor, and ingenious doors in the pigsties which could shut of their own accord.

The barn was vaulted like a cathedral, with brick arches resting on stone walls.

In order to amuse the gentlemen, a servant-girl threw a handful of oats before the hens. The shaft of the press appeared to them enormously big. Next they went up to the pigeon-house. The dairy especially astonished them. By turning cocks in the corners, you could get enough water to flood the flagstones, and, as you entered, a sense of grateful coolness came upon you as a surprise. Brown jars, ranged close to the barred opening in the wall, were full to the brim of milk, while the cream was contained in earthen pans of less depth. Then came rolls of butter, like fragments of a column of copper, and froth overflowed from the tin pails which had just been placed on the ground.

But the gem of the farm was the ox-stall. It was divided into two sections by wooden bars standing upright their full length, one portion being reserved for the cattle, and the other for persons who attended on them. You could scarcely see there, as all the loopholes were closed up. The oxen were eating, with little chains attached to them, and their bodies exhaled a heat which was kept down by the low ceiling. But someone let in the light, and suddenly a thin stream of water flowed into the little channel which was beside the racks. Lowings were heard, and the horns of the cattle made a rattling noise like sticks. All the oxen thrust their muzzles between the bars, and proceeded to drink slowly.

The big teams made their way into the farmyard, and the foals began to neigh. On the ground floor two or three lanterns flashed and then disappeared. The workpeople were passing, dragging their wooden shoes over the pebbles, and the bell was ringing for supper.

The two visitors took their departure.

All they had seen delighted them, and their resolution was taken. After that evening, they took out of their library the four volumes of *La Maison Rustique*, went through Gasperin's course of lectures, and subscribed to an agricultural journal.

In order to be able to attend the fairs more conveniently, they purchased a car, which Bouvard used to drive.

Dressed in blue blouses, with large-brimmed hats, gaiters up to their knees, and horse-dealers' cudgels in their hands, they prowled around cattle, asked questions of labourers, and did not fail to attend at all the agricultural gatherings.

Soon they wearied Maître Gouy with their advice, and especially by their depreciation of his system of fallowing. But the farmer stuck to his routine. He asked to be allowed a quarter, putting forward as a reason the heavy falls of hail. As for the farm-dues, he never furnished any of them. His wife raised an outcry at even the most legitimate claims. At length Bouvard declared his intention not to renew the lease.

Thenceforth Maître Gouy economised the manures, allowed weeds to grow up, ruined the soil; and he took himself off with a fierce air, which showed that he was meditating some scheme of revenge.

Bouvard had calculated that , francs, that is to say, more than four times the rent of the farm, would be enough to start with. His notary sent the amount from Paris.

The property which they had undertaken to cultivate comprised fifteen hectares of grounds and meadows, twenty-three of arable land, and five of waste land, situated on a hillock covered with stones, and known by the name of La Butte.

They procured all the indispensable requirements for the purpose: four horses, a dozen cows, six hogs, one hundred and sixty sheep, and for the household two carters, two women, a shepherd, and in addition a big dog.

In order to get cash at once, they sold their fodder. The price was paid to them directly, and the gold napoleons counted over a chest of oats appeared to them more glittering than any others, more rare and valuable.

In the month of November they brewed cider. It was Bouvard that whipped the horse, while Pécuchet on the trough shovelled off the strained apples.

They panted while pressing the screw, drew the juice off into the vat, looked after the bung-holes, with heavy wooden shoes on their feet; and in all this they found a huge diversion.

Starting with the principle that you cannot have too much corn, they got rid of about half of their artificial meadows; and, as they had not rich pasturing, they made use of oil-cakes, which they put into the ground without pounding, with the result that the crop was a wretched one.

The following year they sowed the ground very thickly. Storms broke out, and the ears of corn were scattered.

Nevertheless, they set their hearts on the cheese, and undertook to clear away the stones from La Butte. A hamper carried away the stones. The whole year, from morn to eve, in sunshine or in rain, the everlasting hamper was seen, with the same man and the same horse, toiling up the hill, coming down, and going up again. Sometimes Bouvard walked in the rear, making a halt half-way up the hill to dry the sweat off his forehead.

As they had confidence in nobody, they treated the animals themselves, giving them purgatives and clysters.

Serious irregularities occurred in the household. The girl in the poultry-yard became *enceinte*. Then they took married servants; but the place soon swarmed with children, cousins, male and female, uncles, and sisters-in-law. A horde of people lived at their expense; and they resolved to sleep in the farm-house successively.

But when evening came they felt depressed, for the filthiness of the room was offensive to them; and besides, Germaine, who brought in the meals, grumbled at every journey. They were preyed upon in all sorts of ways. The threshers in the barn stuffed corn into the pitchers out of which they drank. Pécuchet caught one of them in the act, and exclaimed, while pushing him out by the shoulders:

"Wretch! You are a disgrace to the village that gave you birth!"

His presence inspired no respect. Moreover, he was plagued with the garden. All his time would not have sufficed to keep it in order. Bouvard was occupied with the farm. They took counsel and decided on this arrangement.

The first point was to have good hotbeds. Pécuchet got one made of brick. He painted the frames himself; and, being afraid of too much sunlight, he smeared over all the bell-glasses with chalk. He took care to cut off the tops of the leaves for slips. Next he devoted attention to the layers. He attempted many sorts of grafting—flute-graft, crown-graft, shield-graft, herbaceous grafting, and whip-grafting. With what care he adjusted the two libers! how he tightened the ligatures! and what a heap of ointment it took to cover them again!

Twice a day he took his watering-pot and swung it over the plants as if he would have shed incense over them. In proportion as they became green under the water, which fell in a thin shower, it seemed to him as if he were quenching his own thirst and reviving along with them. Then, yielding to a feeling of intoxication, he snatched off the rose of the watering-pot, and poured out the liquid copiously from the open neck.

At the end of the elm hedge, near the female figure in plaster, stood a kind of log hut. Pécuchet locked up his implements there, and spent delightful hours there picking the berries, writing labels, and putting his little pots in order. He sat down to rest himself on a box at the door of the hut, and then planned fresh improvements.

He had put two clumps of geraniums at the end of the front steps. Between the cypresses and the distaff-shaped trees he had planted sunflowers; and as the plots were covered with buttercups, and all the walks with fresh sand, the garden was quite dazzling in its abundance of yellow hues.

But the bed swarmed with larvæ. In spite of the dead leaves placed there to heat the plants, under the painted frames and the whitened bell-glasses, only a stunted crop made its appearance. He failed with the broccoli, the mad-apples, the turnips, and the watercress, which he had tried to raise in a tub. After the thaw all the artichokes were ruined. The cabbages gave him some consolation. One of them especially excited his hopes. It expanded and shut up quickly, but ended by becoming prodigious and absolutely uneatable. No matter—Pécuchet was content with being the possessor of a monstrosity!

Then he tried his hand at what he regarded as the *summum* of art—the growing of melons.

He sowed many varieties of seed in plates filled with vegetable mould, which he deposited in the soil of the bed. Then he raised another bed, and when it had put forth its virgin buddings he transplanted the best of them, putting bell-glasses over them. He made all the cuttings in accordance with the precepts of *The Good Gardener*. He treated the flowers tenderly; he let the fruits grow in a tangle, and then selected one on either arm, removed the others, and, as soon as they were as large as nuts, he slipped a little board around their rind to prevent them from rotting by contact with dung. He heated them, gave them air, swept off the mist from the bell-glasses with his pocket-handkerchief, and, if he saw lowering clouds, he quickly brought out straw mattings to protect them.

He did not sleep at night on account of them. Many times he even got up out of bed, and, putting on his boots without stockings, shivering in his shirt, he traversed the entire garden to throw his own counterpane over his hotbed frames.

The melons ripened. Bouvard grinned when he saw the first of them. The second was no better; neither was the third. For each of them Pécuchet found a fresh excuse, down to the very last, which he threw out of the window, declaring that he could not understand it at all.

The fact was, he had planted some things beside others of a different species; and so the sweet melons got mixed up with the kitchen-garden melons, the big Portugal with the Grand Mogul variety; and this anarchy was completed by the proximity of the tomatoes—the result being abominable hybrids that had the taste of pumpkins.

Then Pécuchet devoted his attention to the flowers. He wrote to Dumouchel to get shrubs with seeds for him, purchased a stock of heath soil, and set to work resolutely.

But he planted passion-flowers in the shade and pansies in the sun, covered the hyacinths with dung, watered the lilies near their blossoms, tried to stimulate the fuchsias with glue, and actually roasted a pomegranate by exposing it to the heat of the kitchen fire.

When the weather got cold, he screened the eglantines under domes of strong paper which had been lubricated with a candle. They looked like sugarloaves held up by sticks.

The dahlias had enormous props; and between these straight lines could be seen the winding branches of a Sophora Japonica, which remained motionless, without either perishing or growing.

However, since even the rarest trees flourish in the gardens of the capital, they must needs grow successfully at Chavignolles; and Pécuchet provided himself with the Indian lilac, the Chinese rose, and the eucalyptus, then in the beginning of its fame. But all his experiments failed; and at each successive failure he was vastly astonished.

Bouvard, like him, met with obstacles. They held many consultations, opened a book, then passed on to another, and did not know what to resolve upon when there was so much divergence of opinion.

Thus, Puvis recommends marl, while the Roret Manual is opposed to it. As for plaster, in spite of the example of Franklin, Riefel and M. Rigaud did not appear to be in raptures about it.

According to Bouvard, fallow lands were a Gothic prejudice. However, Leclerc has noted cases in which they are almost indispensable. Gasparin mentions a native of Lyons who cultivated cereals in the same field for half a century: this upsets the theory as to the variation of crops. Tull extols tillage to the prejudice of rich pasture; and there is Major Beetson, who by means of tillage would abolish pasture altogether.

In order to understand the indications of the weather, they studied the clouds according to the classification of Luke Howard. They contemplated those which spread out like manes, those which resemble islands, and those which might be taken for mountains of snow—trying to distinguish the nimbus from the cirrus and the stratus from the cumulus. The shapes had altered even before they had discovered the names.

The barometer deceived them; the thermometer taught them nothing; and they had recourse to the device invented in the time of Louis XIV. by a priest from Touraine. A leech in a glass bottle was to rise up in the event of rain, to stick to the bottom in settled weather, and to move about if a storm were threatening. But nearly always the atmosphere contradicted the leech. Three others were put in along with it. The entire four behaved differently.

After many reflections, Bouvard realised that he had made a mistake. His property required cultivation on a large scale, the concentrated system, and he risked all the disposable capital that he had left—thirty thousand francs.

Stimulated by Pécuchet, he began to rave about pasture. In the pit for composts were heaped up branches of trees, blood, guts, feathers—everything that he could find. He used Belgian cordial, Swiss wash, lye, red herrings, wrack, rags; sent for guano, tried to manufacture it himself; and, pushing his principles to the farthest point, he would not suffer even urine or other refuse to be lost. Into his farmyard were carried carcasses of animals, with which he manured his lands. Their cut-up carrion strewed the fields. Bouvard smiled in the midst of this stench. A pump fixed to a dung-cart spattered the liquid manure over the crops. To those who assumed an air of disgust, he used to say, "But 'tis gold! 'tis gold!" And he was sorry that he had not still more manures. Happy the land where natural grottoes are found full of the excrements of birds!

The colza was thin; the oats only middling; and the corn sold very badly on account of its smell. A curious circumstance was that La Butte, with the stones cleared away from it at last, yielded less than before.

He deemed it advisable to renew his material. He bought a Guillaume scarifier, a Valcourt weeder, an English drill-machine, and the great swing-plough of Mathieu de Dombasle, but the ploughboy disparaged it.

"Do you learn to use it!"

"Well, do you show me!"

He made an attempt to show, but blundered, and the peasants sneered. He could never make them obey the command of the bell. He was incessantly bawling after them, rushing from one place to another, taking down observations in a note-book, making appointments and forgetting all about them—and his head was boiling over with industrial speculations.

He got the notion into his head of cultivating the poppy for the purpose of getting opium from it, and above all the milk-vetch, which he intended to sell under the name of "family coffee."

Finally, in order to fatten his oxen the more quickly, he blooded them for an entire fortnight.

He killed none of his pigs, and gorged them with salted oats. The pigsty soon became too narrow. The animals obstructed the farmyard, broke down the fences, and went gnawing at everything.

In the hot weather twenty-five sheep began to get spoiled, and shortly afterwards died. The same week three bulls perished owing to Bouvard's blood-lettings.

In order to destroy the maggots, he thought of shutting up the fowls in a hencoop on rollers, which two men had to push along behind the plough—a thing which had only the effect of breaking the claws of the fowls.

He manufactured beer with germander-leaves, and gave it to the harvesters as cider. The children cried, the women moaned, and the men raged. They all threatened to go, and Bouvard gave way to them.

However, to convince them of the harmlessness of his beverage, he swallowed several bottles of it in their presence; then he got cramps, but concealed his pains under a playful exterior. He even got the mixture sent to his own residence. He drank some of it with Pécuchet in the evening, and both of them tried to persuade themselves that it was good. Besides, it was necessary not to let it go to waste. Bouvard's colic having got worse, Germaine went for the doctor.

He was a grave-looking man, with a round forehead, and he began by frightening his patient. He thought the gentleman's attack of cholerine must be connected with the beer which people were talking about in the country. He desired to know what it was composed of, and found fault with it in scientific terms with shruggings of the shoulders. Pécuchet, who had supplied the recipe for it, was mortified.

In spite of pernicious limings, stinted redressings, and unseasonable weedings, Bouvard had in front of him, in the following year, a splendid crop of wheat. He thought of drying it by fermentation, in the Dutch fashion, on the Clap-Meyer system: that is to say, he got it thrown down all of a heap and piled up in stacks, which would be overturned as soon as the damp escaped from them, and then exposed to the open air—after which Bouvard went off without the least uneasiness.

Next day, while they were at dinner, they heard under the beech trees the beating of a drum. Germaine ran out to know what was the matter,

but the man was by this time some distance away. Almost at the same moment the church-bell rang violently.

Bouvard and Pécuchet felt alarmed, and, impatient to learn what had happened, they rushed bareheaded along the Chavignolles road.

An old woman passed them. She knew nothing about it. They stopped a little boy, who replied:

"I believe it's a fire!"

And the drum continued beating and the bell ringing more loudly than before. At length they reached the nearest houses in the village. The grocer, some yards away, exclaimed:

"The fire is at your place!"

Pécuchet stepped out in double-quick time; and he said to Bouvard, who trotted by his side with equal speed:

"One, two! one, two!"—counting his steps regularly, like the chasseurs of Vincennes.

The road which they took was a continuously uphill one; the sloping ground hid the horizon from their view. They reached a height close to La Butte, and at a single glance the disaster was revealed to them.

All the stacks, here and there, were flaming like volcanoes in the midst of the plain, stripped bare in the evening stillness. Around the biggest of them there were about three hundred persons, perhaps; and under the command of M. Foureau, the mayor, in a tricoloured scarf, youngsters, with poles and crooks, were dragging down the straw from the top in order to save the rest of it.

Bouvard, in his eagerness, was near knocking down Madame Bordin, who happened to be there. Then, seeing one of his servant-boys, he loaded him with insults for not having given him warning. The servant-boy, on the contrary, through excess of zeal, had at first rushed to the house, then to the church, next to where Monsieur himself was staying, and had returned by the other road.

Bouvard lost his head. His entire household gathered round him, all talking together, and he forbade them to knock down the stacks, begged of them to give him some help, called for water, and asked where were the firemen.

"We've got to get them first!" exclaimed the mayor.

"That's your fault!" replied Bouvard.

He flew into a passion, and made use of improper language, and everyone wondered at the patience of M. Foureau, who, all the same, was a surly individual, as might be seen from his big lips and bulldog jaw.

The heat of the stacks became so great that nobody could come close to them any longer. Under the devouring flames the straw writhed with a crackling sound, and the grains of corn lashed one's face as if they were buckshot. Then the stack fell in a huge burning pile to the ground, and a shower of sparks flew out of it, while fiery waves floated above the red mass, which presented in its alternations of colour parts rosy as vermilion and others like clotted blood. The night had come, the wind was swelling; from time to time, a flake of fire passed across the black sky.

Bouvard viewed the conflagration with tears in his eyes, which were veiled by his moist lids, and his whole face was swollen with grief. Madame Bordin, while playing with the fringes of her green shawl, called him "Poor Monsieur!" and tried to console him. Since nothing could be done, he ought to do himself justice.

Pécuchet did not weep. Very pale, or rather livid, with open mouth, and hair stuck together with cold sweat, he stood apart, brooding. But the curé who had suddenly arrived on the scene, murmured, in a wheedling tone:

"Ah! really, what a misfortune! It is very annoying. Be sure that I enter into your feelings."

The others did not affect any regret. They chatted and smiled, with hands spread out before the flame. An old man picked out burning straws to light his pipe with; and one blackguard cried out that it was very funny.

"Yes, 'tis nice fun!" retorted Bouvard, who had just overheard him.

The fire abated, the burning piles subsided, and an hour later only ashes remained, making round, black marks on the plain. Then all withdrew.

Madame Bordin and the Abbé Jeufroy led MM. Bouvard and Pécuchet back to their abode.

On the way the widow addressed very polite reproaches to her neighbour on his unsociableness, and the ecclesiastic expressed his great surprise at not having up to the present known such a distinguished parishioner of his.

When they were alone together, they inquired into the cause of the conflagration, and, in place of recognising, like the rest of the world, that the moist straw had taken fire of its own accord, they suspected that it was a case of revenge. It proceeded, no doubt, from Maître Gouy, or perhaps from the mole-catcher. Six months before Bouvard had refused to accept his services, and even maintained, before a circle of listeners, that his trade was a baneful one, and that the government ought to prohibit it. Since that time the man prowled about the locality. He wore his beard full-grown, and appeared to them frightful-looking, especially in the evening, when he presented himself outside the farmyard, shaking his long pole garnished with hanging moles.

The damage done was considerable, and in order to know their exact position, Pécuchet for eight days worked at Bouvard's books, which he pronounced to be "a veritable labyrinth." After he had compared the day-book, the correspondence, and the ledger covered with pencil-notes and discharges, he realised the truth: no goods to sell, no funds to get in, and in the cash-box zero. The capital showed a deficit of thirty-three thousand francs.

Bouvard would not believe it, and more than twenty times they went over the accounts. They always arrived at the same conclusion. Two years more of such farming, and their fortune would be spent on it! The only remedy was to sell out.

To do that, it was necessary to consult a notary. The step was a disagreeable one: Pécuchet took it on himself.

In M. Marescot's opinion, it was better not to put up any posters. He would speak about the farm to respectable clients, and would let them make proposals.

"Very well," said Bouvard, "we have time before us." He intended to get a tenant; then they would see. "We shall not be more unlucky than before; only now we are forced to practise economy!"

Pécuchet was disgusted with gardening, and a few days later he remarked:

"We ought to give ourselves up exclusively to tree culture—not for pleasure, but as a speculation. A pear which is the product of three soils is sometimes sold in the capital for five or six francs. Gardeners make out of apricots twenty-five thousand livres in the year! At St. Petersburg, during the winter, grapes are sold at a napoleon per grape. It is a beautiful industry, you must admit! And what does it cost? Attention, manuring, and a fresh touch of the pruning-knife."

It excited Bouvard's imagination so much that they sought immediately in their books for a nomenclature for purchasable plants, and, having selected names which appeared to them wonderful, they applied to a nurseryman from Falaise, who busied himself in supplying them with three hundred stalks for which he had not found a sale. They got a lock-smith for the props, an iron-worker for the fasteners, and a carpenter for the rests. The forms of the trees were designed beforehand. Pieces of lath on the wall represented candelabra. Two posts at the ends of the plat-bands supported steel threads in a horizontal position; and in the orchard, hoops indicated the structure of vases, cone-shaped switches that of pyramids, so well that, in arriving in the midst of them, you imagined you saw pieces of some unknown machinery or the framework of a pyrotechnic apparatus.

The holes having been dug, they cut the ends of all the roots, good or bad, and buried them in a compost. Six months later the plants were dead. Fresh orders to the nurseryman, and fresh plantings in still deeper holes. But the rain softening the soil, the grafts buried themselves in the ground of their own accord, and the trees sprouted out.

When spring had come, Pécuchet set about the pruning of pear trees. He did not cut down the shoots, spared the superfluous side branches, and, persisting in trying to lay the "duchesses" out in a square when they ought to go in a string on one side, he broke them or tore them down invariably. As for the peach trees, he got mixed up with over-mother branches, under-mother branches, and second-under-mother branches. The empty and the full always presented themselves when they were not wanted, and it was impossible to obtain on an espalier a perfect

rectangle, with six branches to the right and six to the left, not including the two principal ones, the whole forming a fine bit of herringbone work.

Bouvard tried to manage the apricot trees, but they rebelled. He lowered their stems nearly to a level with the ground; none of them shot up again. The cherry trees, in which he had made notches, produced gum.

At first, they cut very long, which destroyed the principal buds, and then very short, which led to excessive branching; and they often hesitated, not knowing how to distinguish between buds of trees and buds of flowers. They were delighted to have flowers, but when they recognised their mistake, they tore off three fourths of them to strengthen the remainder.

Incessantly they kept talking about "sap" and "cambium," "paling up," "breaking down," and "blinding of an eye." In the middle of their dining-room they had in a frame the list of their young growths, as if they were pupils, with a number which was repeated in the garden on a little piece of wood, at the foot of the tree. Out of bed at dawn, they kept working till nightfall with their twigs carried in their belts. In the cold mornings of spring, Bouvard wore his knitted vest under his blouse, and Pécuchet his old frock-coat under his packcloth wrapper; and the people passing by the open fence heard them coughing in the damp atmosphere.

Sometimes Pécuchet drew forth his manual from his pocket, and he studied a paragraph of it standing up with his grafting-tool near him in the attitude of the gardener who decorated the frontispiece of the book. This resemblance flattered him exceedingly, and made him entertain more esteem for the author.

Bouvard was continually perched on a high ladder before the pyramids. One day he was seized with dizziness, and, not daring to come down farther, he called on Pécuchet to come to his aid.

At length pears made their appearance, and there were plums in the orchard. Then they made use of all the devices which had been recommended to them against the birds. But the bits of glass made dazzling reflections, the clapper of the wind-mill woke them during the

night, and the sparrows perched on the lay figure. They made a second, and even a third, varying the dress, but without any useful result.

However, they could hope for some fruit. Pécuchet had just given an intimation of the fact to Bouvard, when suddenly the thunder resounded and the rain fell—a heavy and violent downpour. The wind at intervals shook the entire surface of the espalier. The props gave way one after the other, and the unfortunate distaff-shaped trees, while swaying under the storm, dashed their pears against one another.

Pécuchet, surprised by the shower, had taken refuge in the hut. Bouvard stuck to the kitchen. They saw splinters of wood, branches, and slates whirling in front of them; and the sailors' wives who, on the sea-shore ten leagues away, were gazing out at the sea, had not eyes more wistful or hearts more anxious. Then, suddenly, the supports and wooden bars of espaliers facing one another, together with the rail-work, toppled down into the garden beds.

What a picture when they went to inspect the scene! The cherries and plums covered the grass, amid the dissolving hailstones. The Passe Colmars were destroyed, as well as the Besi des Vétérans and the Triomphes de Jordoigne. There was barely left amongst the apples even a few Bon Papas; and a dozen Tetons de Venus, the entire crop of peaches, rolled into the pools of water by the side of the box trees, which had been torn up by the roots.

After dinner, at which they ate very little, Pécuchet said softly:

"We should do well to see after the farm, lest anything has happened to it."

"Bah! only to find fresh causes of sadness."

"Perhaps so; for we are not exactly lucky."

And they made complaints against Providence and against nature.

Bouvard, with his elbows on the table, spoke in little whispers; and as all their troubles began to subside, their former agricultural projects came back to their recollection, especially the starch manufacture and the invention of a new sort of cheese.

Pécuchet drew a loud breath; and while he crammed several pinches of snuff into his nostrils, he reflected that, if fate had so willed it, he might now be a member of an agricultural society, might be delivering

brilliant lectures, and might be referred to as an authority in the newspapers.

Bouvard cast a gloomy look around him.

"Faith! I'm anxious to get rid of all this, in order that we may settle down somewhere else!"

"Just as you like," said Pécuchet; and the next moment: "The authors recommend us to suppress every direct passage. In this way the sap is counteracted, and the tree necessarily suffers thereby. In order to be in good health, it would be necessary for it to have no fruit! However, those which we prune and which we never manure produce them not so big, it is true, but more luscious. I require them to give me a reason for this! And not only each kind demands its particular attentions, but still more each individual tree, according to climate, temperature, and a heap of things! Where, then, is the rule? and what hope have we of any success or profit?"

Bouvard replied to him, "You will see in Gasparin that the profit cannot exceed the tenth of the capital. Therefore, we should be doing better by investing this capital in a banking-house. At the end of fifteen years, by the accumulation of interest, we'd have it doubled, without having our constitutions ground down."

Pécuchet hung down his head.

"Arboriculture may be a humbug!"

"Like agriculture!" replied Bouvard.

Then they blamed themselves for having been too ambitious, and they resolved to husband thenceforth their labour and their money. An occasional pruning would suffice for the orchard. The counter-espaliers were forbidden, and dead or fallen trees should not be replaced; but he was going to do a nasty job—nothing less than to destroy all the others which remained standing. How was he to set about the work?

Pécuchet made several diagrams, while using his mathematical case. Bouvard gave him advice. They arrived at no satisfactory result. Fortunately, they discovered amongst their collection of books Boitard's work entitled *L'Architecte des Jardins*.

The author divides them into a great number of styles. First there is the melancholy and romantic style, which is distinguished by

immortelles, ruins, tombs, and "a votive offering to the Virgin, indicating the place where a lord has fallen under the blade of an assassin." The terrible style is composed of overhanging rocks, shattered trees, burning huts; the exotic style, by planting Peruvian torch-thistles, "in order to arouse memories in a colonist or a traveller." The grave style should, like Ermenonville, offer a temple to philosophy. The majestic style is characterised by obelisks and triumphal arches; the mysterious style by moss and by grottoes; while a lake is appropriate to the dreamy style. There is even the fantastic style, of which the most beautiful specimen might have been lately seen in a garden at Würtemberg—for there might have been met successively a wild boar, a hermit, several sepulchres, and a barque detaching itself from the shore of its own accord, in order to lead you into a boudoir where water-spouts lave you when you are settling yourself down upon a sofa.

Before this horizon of marvels, Bouvard and Pécuchet experienced a kind of bedazzlement. The fantastic style appeared to them reserved for princes. The temple to philosophy would be cumbersome. The votive offering of the Madonna would have no signification, having regard to the lack of assassins, and—so much the worse for the colonists and the travellers—the American plants would cost too much. But the rocks were possible, as well as the shattered trees, the immortelles, and the moss; and in their enthusiasm for new ideas, after many experiments, with the assistance of a single man-servant, and for a trifling sum, they made for themselves a residence which had no analogy to it in the entire department.

The elm hedge, open here and there, allowed the light of day to fall on the thicket, which was full of winding paths in the fashion of a labyrinth. They had conceived the idea of making in the espalier wall an archway, through which the prospect could be seen. As the arch could not remain suspended, the result was an enormous breach and a fall of wreckage to the ground.

They had sacrificed the asparagus in order to build on the spot an Etruscan tomb, that is to say, a quadrilateral figure in dark plaster, six feet in height, and looking like a dog-hole. Four little pine trees at the

corners flanked the monument, which was to be surmounted by an urn and enriched by an inscription.

In the other part of the kitchen garden, a kind of Rialto projected over a basin, presenting on its margin encrusted shells of mussels. The soil drank up the water—no matter! they would contrive a glass bottom which would keep it back.

The hut had been transformed into a rustic summer-house with the aid of coloured glass.

At the top of the hillock, six trees, cut square, supported a tin head-piece with the edges turned up, and the whole was meant to signify a Chinese pagoda.

They had gone to the banks of the Orne to select granite, and had broken it, marked the pieces with numbers, and carried them back themselves in a cart, then had joined the fragments together with cement, placing them one above the other in a mass; and in the middle of the grass arose a rock resembling a gigantic potato.

Something further was needed to complete the harmony. They pulled down the largest linden tree they had (however, it was three quarters dead), and laid it down the entire length of the garden, in such a way that one would imagine it had been carried thither by a torrent or levelled to the ground by a thunderstorm.

The task finished, Bouvard, who was on the steps, cried from a distance:

"Here! you can see best!"—"See best!" was repeated in the air.

Pécuchet answered:

"I am going there!"—"Going there!"

"Hold on! 'Tis an echo!"—"Echo!"

The linden tree had hitherto prevented it from being produced, and it was assisted by the pagoda, as it faced the barn, whose gables rose above the row of trees.

In order to try the effect of the echo, they amused themselves by giving vent to comical phrases: Bouvard yelled out language of a blackguard description.

He had been several times at Falaise, under the pretence of going there to receive money, and he always came back with little parcels, which he

locked up in the chest of drawers. Pécuchet started one morning to repair to Bretteville, and returned very late with a basket, which he hid under his bed. Next day, when he awoke, Bouvard was surprised. The first two yew trees of the principal walk, which the day before were still spherical, had the appearance of peacocks, and a horn with two porcelain knobs represented the beak and the eyes. Pécuchet had risen at dawn, and trembling lest he should be discovered, he had cut the two trees according to the measurement given in the written instructions sent him by Dumouchel.

For six months the others behind the two above mentioned assumed the forms of pyramids, cubes, cylinders, stags, or armchairs; but there was nothing equal to the peacocks. Bouvard acknowledged it with many eulogies.

Under pretext of having forgotten his spade, he drew his comrade into the labyrinth, for he had profited by Pécuchet's absence to do, himself too, something sublime.

The gate leading into the fields was covered over with a coating of plaster, under which were ranged in beautiful order five or six bowls of pipes, representing Abd-el-Kader, negroes, naked women, horses' feet, and death's-heads.

"Do you understand my impatience?"

"I rather think so!"

And in their emotion they embraced each other.

Like all artists, they felt the need of being applauded, and Bouvard thought of giving a great dinner.

"Take care!" said Pécuchet, "you are going to plunge into entertainments. It is a whirlpool!"

The matter, however, was decided. Since they had come to live in the country, they had kept themselves isolated. Everybody, through eagerness to make their acquaintance, accepted their invitation, except the Count de Faverges, who had been summoned to the capital by business. They fell back on M. Hurel, his factotum.

Beljambe, the innkeeper, formerly a *chef* at Lisieux, was to cook certain dishes; Germaine had engaged the services of the poultry-wench; and Marianne, Madame Bordin's servant-girl, would also come. Since

four o'clock the range was wide open; and the two proprietors, full of impatience, awaited their guests.

Hurel stopped under the beech row to adjust his frock-coat. Then the curé stepped forward, arrayed in a new cassock, and, a second later, M. Foureau, in a velvet waistcoat. The doctor gave his arm to his wife, who walked with some difficulty, assisting herself with her parasol. A stream of red ribbons fluttered behind them—it was the cap of Madame Bordin, who was dressed in a lovely robe of shot silk. The gold chain of her watch dangled over her breast, and rings glittered on both her hands, which were partly covered with black mittens. Finally appeared the notary, with a Panama hat on his head, and an eyeglass—for the professional practitioner had not stifled in him the man of the world. The drawing-room floor was waxed so that one could not stand upright there. The eight Utrecht armchairs had their backs to the wall; a round table in the centre supported the liqueur case; and above the mantelpiece could be seen the portrait of Père Bouvard. The shades, reappearing in the imperfect light, made the mouth grin and the eyes squint, and a slight mouldiness on the cheek-bones seemed to produce the illusion of real whiskers. The guests traced a resemblance between him and his son, and Madame Bordin added, glancing at Bouvard, that he must have been a very fine man.

After an hour's waiting, Pécuchet announced that they might pass into the dining-room.

The white calico curtains with red borders were, like those of the drawing-room, completely drawn before the windows, and the sun's rays passing across them, flung a brilliant light on the wainscotings, the only ornament of which was a barometer.

Bouvard placed the two ladies beside him, while Pécuchet had the mayor on his left and the curé on his right.

They began with the oysters. They had the taste of mud. Bouvard was annoyed, and was prodigal of excuses, and Pécuchet got up in order to go into the kitchen and make a scene with Beljambe.

During the whole of the first course, which consisted of a brill with a vol-au-vent and stewed pigeons, the conversation turned on the mode of manufacturing cider; after which they discussed what meats were

digestible or indigestible. Naturally, the doctor was consulted. He looked at matters sceptically, like a man who had dived into the depths of science, and yet did not brook the slightest contradiction.

At the same time, with the sirloin of beef, Burgundy was supplied. It was muddy. Bouvard, attributing this accident to the rinsing of the bottles, got them to try three others without more success; then he poured out some St. Julien, manifestly not long enough in bottle, and all the guests were mute. Hurel smiled without discontinuing; the heavy steps of the waiters resounded over the flooring.

Madame Vaucorbeil, who was dumpy and waddling in her gait (she was near her confinement), had maintained absolute silence. Bouvard, not knowing what to talk to her about, spoke of the theatre at Caen.

"My wife never goes to the play," interposed the doctor.

M. Marescot observed that, when he lived in Paris, he used to go only to the Italian operas.

"For my part," said Bouvard, "I used to pay for a seat in the pit sometimes at the Vaudeville to hear farces."

Foureau asked Madame Bordin whether she liked farces.

"That depends on what kind they are," she said.

The mayor rallied her. She made sharp rejoinders to his pleasantries. Then she mentioned a recipe for preparing gherkins. However, her talents for housekeeping were well known, and she had a little farm, which was admirably looked after.

Foureau asked Bouvard, "Is it your intention to sell yours?"

"Upon my word, up to this I don't know what to do exactly."

"What! not even the Escalles piece?" interposed the notary. "That would suit you, Madame Bordin."

The widow replied in an affected manner:

"The demands of M. Bouvard would be too high."

"Perhaps someone could soften him."

"I will not try."

"Bah! if you embraced him?"

"Let us try, all the same," said Bouvard.

And he kissed her on both cheeks, amid the plaudits of the guests.

Almost immediately after this incident, they uncorked the champagne, whose detonations caused an additional sense of enjoyment. Pécuchet made a sign; the curtains opened, and the garden showed itself.

In the twilight it looked dreadful. The rockery, like a mountain, covered the entire grass plot; the tomb formed a cube in the midst of spinaches, the Venetian bridge a circumflex accent over the kidney-beans, and the summer-house beyond a big black spot, for they had burned its straw roof to make it more poetic. The yew trees, shaped like stags or armchairs, succeeded to the tree that seemed thunder-stricken, extending transversely from the elm row to the arbour, where tomatoes hung like stalactites. Here and there a sunflower showed its yellow disk. The Chinese pagoda, painted red, seemed a lighthouse on the hillock. The peacocks' beaks, struck by the sun, reflected back the rays, and behind the railed gate, now freed from its boards, a perfectly flat landscape bounded the horizon.

In the face of their guests' astonishment Bouvard and Pécuchet experienced a veritable delight.

Madame Bordin admired the peacocks above all; but the tomb was not appreciated, nor the cot in flames, nor the wall in ruins. Then each in turn passed over the bridge. In order to fill the basin, Bouvard and Pécuchet had been carrying water in carts all the morning. It had escaped between the foundation stones, which were imperfectly joined together, and covered them over again with lime.

While they were walking about, the guests indulged in criticism.

"In your place that's what I'd have done."—"The green peas are late."—"Candidly, this corner is not all right."—"With such pruning you'll never get fruit."

Bouvard was obliged to answer that he did not care a jot for fruit.

As they walked past the hedge of trees, he said with a sly air:

"Ah! here's a lady that puts us out of countenance: a thousand excuses!"

It was a well-seasoned joke; everyone knew "the lady in plaster."

Finally, after many turns in the labyrinth, they arrived in front of the gate with the pipes. Looks of amazement were exchanged. Bouvard

observed the faces of his guests, and, impatient to learn what was their opinion, asked:

"What do you say to it?"

Madame Bordin burst out laughing. All the others followed her example, after their respective ways—the curé giving a sort of cluck like a hen, Hurel coughing, the doctor mourning over it, while his wife had a nervous spasm, and Foureau, an unceremonious type of man, breaking an Abd-el-Kader and putting it into his pocket as a souvenir.

When they had left the tree-hedge, Bouvard, to astonish the company with the echo, exclaimed with all his strength:

"Servant, ladies!"

Nothing! No echo. This was owing to the repairs made in the barn, the gable and the roof having been demolished.

The coffee was served on the hillock; and the gentlemen were about to begin a game of ball, when they saw in front of them, behind the railed fence, a man staring at them.

He was lean and sunburnt, with a pair of red trousers in rags, a blue waistcoat, no shirt, his black beard cut like a brush. He articulated, in a hoarse voice:

"Give me a glass of wine!"

The mayor and the Abbé Jeufroy had at once recognised him. He had formerly been a joiner at Chavignolles.

"Come, Gorju! take yourself off," said M. Foureau. "You ought not to be asking for alms."

"I! Alms!" cried the exasperated man. "I served seven years in the wars in Africa. I've only just got up out of a hospital. Good God! must I turn cutthroat?"

His anger subsided of its own accord, and, with his two fists on his hips, he surveyed the assembled guests with a melancholy and defiant air. The fatigue of bivouacs, absinthe, and fever, an entire existence of wretchedness and debauchery, stood revealed in his dull eyes. His white lips quivered, exposing the gums. The vast sky, empurpled, enveloped him in a blood-red light; and his obstinacy in remaining there caused a species of terror.

Bouvard, to have done with him, went to look for the remnants of a bottle. The vagabond swallowed the wine greedily, then disappeared amongst the oats, gesticulating as he went.

After this, blame was attached by those present to Bouvard. Such kindnesses encouraged disorder. But Bouvard, irritated at the ill-success of his garden, took up the defence of the people. They all began talking at the same time.

Foureau extolled the government. Hurel saw nothing in the world but landed property. The Abbé Jeufroy complained of the fact that it did not protect religion. Pécuchet attacked the taxes. Madame Bordin exclaimed at intervals, "As for me, I detest the Republic." And the doctor declared himself in favour of progress: "For, indeed, gentlemen, we have need of reforms."

"Possibly," said Foureau; "but all these ideas are injurious to business."

"I laugh at business!" cried Pécuchet.

Vaucorbeil went on: "At least let us make allowance for abilities."

Bouvard would not go so far.

"That is your opinion," replied the doctor; "there's an end of you, then! Good evening. And I wish you a deluge in order to sail in your basin!"

"And I, too, am going," said M. Foureau the next moment; and, pointing to the pocket where the Abd-el-Kader was, "If I feel the want of another, I'll come back."

The curé, before departing, timidly confided to Pécuchet that he did not think this imitation of a tomb in the midst of vegetables quite decorous. Hurel, as he withdrew, made a low bow to the company. M. Marescot had disappeared after dessert. Madame Bordin again went over her recipe for gherkins, promised a second for plums with brandy, and made three turns in the large walk; but, passing close to the linden tree, the end of her dress got caught, and they heard her murmuring:

"My God! what a piece of idiocy this tree is!"

At midnight the two hosts, beneath the arbour, gave vent to their resentment.

No doubt one might find fault with two or three little details here and there in the dinner; and yet the guests had gorged themselves like ogres,

showing that it was not so bad. But, as for the garden, so much depreciation sprang from the blackest jealousy. And both of them, lashing themselves into a rage, went on:

"Ha! water is needed in the basin, is it? Patience! they may see even a swan and fishes in it!"

"They scarcely noticed the pagoda."

"To pretend that the ruins are not proper is an imbecile's view."

"And the tomb objectionable! Why objectionable? Hasn't a man the right to erect one in his own demesne? I even intend to be buried in it!"

"Don't talk like that!" said Pécuchet.

Then they passed the guests in review.

"The doctor seems to me a nice snob!"

"Did you notice the sneer of M. Marescot before the portrait?"

"What a low fellow the mayor is! When you dine in a house, hang it! you should show some respect towards the curios."

"Madame Bordin!" said Bouvard.

"Ah! that one's a schemer. Don't annoy me by talking about her."

Disgusted with society, they resolved to see nobody any more, but live exclusively by themselves and for themselves.

And they spent days in the wine-cellar, picking the tartar off the bottles, re-varnished all the furniture, enamelled the rooms; and each evening, as they watched the wood burning, they discussed the best system of fuel.

Through economy they tried to smoke hams, and attempted to do the washing themselves. Germaine, whom they inconvenienced, used to shrug her shoulders. When the time came for making preserves she got angry, and they took up their station in the bakehouse. It was a disused wash-house, where there was, under the faggots, a big, old-fashioned tub, excellently fitted for their projects, the ambition having seized them to manufacture preserves.

Fourteen glass bottles were filled with tomatoes and green peas. They coated the stoppers with quicklime and cheese, attached to the rims silk cords, and then plunged them into boiling water. It evaporated; they poured in cold water; the difference of temperature caused the bowls to burst. Only three of them were saved. Then they procured old sardine

boxes, put veal cutlets into them, and plunged them into a vessel of boiling water. They came out as round as balloons. The cold flattened them out afterwards. To continue their experiments, they shut up in other boxes eggs, chiccory, lobsters, a hotchpotch of fish, and a soup!—and they applauded themselves like M. Appert, "on having fixed the seasons." Such discoveries, according to Pécuchet, carried him beyond the exploits of conquerors.

They improved upon Madame Bordin's pickles by spicing the vinegar with pepper; and their brandy plums were very much superior. By the process of steeping ratafia, they obtained raspberry and absinthe. With honey and angelica in a cask of Bagnolles, they tried to make Malaga wine; and they likewise undertook the manufacture of champagne! The bottles of Châblis diluted with water must burst of themselves. Then he no longer was doubtful of success.

Their studies widening, they came to suspect frauds in all articles of food. They cavilled with the baker on the colour of his bread; they made the grocer their enemy by maintaining that he adulterated his chocolate. They went to Falaise for a jujube, and, even under the apothecary's own eyes, they submitted his paste to the test of water. It assumed the appearance of a piece of bacon, which indicated gelatine.

After this triumph, their pride rose to a high pitch. They bought up the stock of a bankrupt distiller, and soon there arrived in the house sieves, barrels, funnels, skimmers, filters, and scales, without counting a bowl of wood with a ball attached and a Moreshead still, which required a reflecting-furnace with a basket funnel. They learned how sugar is clarified, and the different kinds of boilings, the large and the small system of boiling twice over, the blowing system, the methods of making up in balls, the reduction of sugar to a viscous state, and the making of burnt sugar. But they longed to use the still; and they broached the fine liqueurs, beginning with the aniseed cordial. The liquid nearly always drew away the materials with it, or rather they stuck together at the bottom; at other times they were mistaken as to the amount of the ingredients. Around them shone great copper pans; egg-shaped vessels projected their narrow openings; saucepans hung from the walls. Frequently one of them culled herbs on the table, while the

other made the ball swing in the suspended bowl. They stirred the ladles; they tasted the mashes.

Bouvard, always in a perspiration, had no garment on save his shirt and his trousers, drawn up to the pit of his stomach by his short braces; but, giddy as a bird, he would forget the opening in the centre of the cucurbit, or would make the fire too strong.

Pécuchet kept muttering calculations, motionless in his long blouse, a kind of child's smock-frock with sleeves; and they looked upon themselves as very serious people engaged in very useful occupations.

At length they dreamed of a cream which would surpass all others. They would put into it coriander as in Kummel, kirsch as in Maraschino, hyssop as in Chartreuse, amber-seed as in Vespetro cordial, and sweet calamus as in Krambambuly; and it would be coloured red with sandalwood. But under what name should they introduce it for commercial purposes?—for they would want a name easy to retain and yet fanciful. Having turned the matter over a long time, they determined that it should be called "Bouvarine."

About the end of autumn stains appeared in the three glass bowls containing the preserves. The tomatoes and green peas were rotten. That must have been due to the way they had stopped up the vessels. Then the problem of stoppage tormented them. In order to try the new methods, they required money; and the farm had eaten up their resources.

Many times tenants had offered themselves; but Bouvard would not have them. His principal farm-servant carried on the cultivation according to his directions, with a risky economy, to such an extent that the crops diminished and everything was imperilled; and they were talking about their embarrassments when Maître Gouy entered the laboratory, escorted by his wife, who remained timidly in the background.

Thanks to all the dressings they had got, the lands were improved, and he had come to take up the farm again. He ran it down. In spite of all their toils, the profits were uncertain; in short, if he wanted it, that was because of his love for the country, and his regret for such good masters.

They dismissed him coldly. He came back the same evening.

Pécuchet had preached at Bouvard; they were on the point of giving way. Gouy asked for a reduction of rent; and when the others protested, he began to bellow rather than speak, invoking the name of God, enumerating his labours, and extolling his merits. When they called on him to state his terms, he hung down his head instead of answering. Then his wife, seated near the door, with a big basket on her knees, made similar protestations, screeching in a sharp voice, like a hen that has been hurt.

At last the lease was agreed on, the rent being fixed at three thousand francs a year—a third less than it had been formerly.

Before they had separated, Maître Gouy offered to buy up the stock, and the bargaining was renewed.

The valuation of the chattels occupied fifteen days. Bouvard was dying of fatigue. He let everything go for a sum so contemptible that Gouy at first opened his eyes wide, and exclaiming, "Agreed!" slapped his palm.

After which the proprietors, following the old custom, proposed that they should take a "nip" at the house, and Pécuchet opened a bottle of his Malaga, less through generosity than in the hope of eliciting eulogies on the wine.

But the husbandman said, with a sour look, "It's like liquorice syrup." And his wife, "in order to get rid of the taste," asked for a glass of brandy.

A graver matter engaged their attention. All the ingredients of the "Bouvarine" were now collected. They heaped them together in the cucurbit, with the alcohol, lighted the fire, and waited. However, Pécuchet, annoyed by the misadventure about the Malaga, took the tin boxes out of the cupboard and pulled the lid off the first, then off the second, and then off the third. He angrily flung them down, and called out to Bouvard. The latter had fastened the cock of the worm in order to try the effect on the preserves.

The disillusion was complete. The slices of veal were like boiled boot-soles; a muddy fluid had taken the place of the lobster; the fish-stew was unrecognisable; mushroom growths had sprouted over the soup, and an intolerable smell tainted the laboratory.

Suddenly, with the noise of a bombshell, the still burst into twenty pieces, which jumped up to the ceiling, smashing the pots, flattening out the skimmers and shattering the glasses. The coal was scattered about, the furnace was demolished, and next day Germaine found a spatula in the yard.

The force of the steam had broken the instrument to such an extent that the cucurbit was pinned to the head of the still.

Pécuchet immediately found himself squatted behind the vat, and Bouvard lay like one who had fallen over a stool. For ten minutes they remained in this posture, not daring to venture on a single movement, pale with terror, in the midst of broken glass. When they were able to recover the power of speech, they asked themselves what was the cause of so many misfortunes, and of the last above all? And they could understand nothing about the matter except that they were near being killed. Pécuchet finished with these words:

"It is, perhaps, because we do not know chemistry!"

CHAPTER III.

Amateur Chemists.

In order to understand chemistry they procured Regnault's course of lectures, and were, in the first place, informed that "simple bodies are perhaps compound." They are divided into metalloids and metals—a difference in which, the author observes, there is "nothing absolute." So with acids and bases, "a body being able to behave in the manner of acids or of bases, according to circumstances."

The notation appeared to them irregular. The multiple proportions perplexed Pécuchet.

"Since one molecule of *a*, I suppose, is combined with several particles of *b*, it seems to me that this molecule ought to be divided into as many particles; but, if it is divided, it ceases to be unity, the primordial molecule. In short, I do not understand."

"No more do I," said Bouvard.

And they had recourse to a work less difficult, that of Girardin, from which they acquired the certainty that ten litres of air weigh a hundred grammes, that lead does not go into pencils, and that the diamond is only carbon.

What amazed them above all is that the earth, as an element, does not exist.

They grasped the working of straw, gold, silver, the lye-washing of linen, the tinning of saucepans; then, without the least scruple, Bouvard and Pécuchet launched into organic chemistry.

What a marvel to find again in living beings the same substances of which the minerals are composed! Nevertheless they experienced a sort of humiliation at the idea that their own personality contained phosphorus, like matches; albumen, like the whites of eggs; and hydrogen gas, like street-lamps.

After colours and oily substances came the turn of fermentation. This brought them to acids—and the law of equivalents once more confused them. They tried to elucidate it by means of the atomic theory, which fairly swamped them.

In Bouvard's opinion instruments would have been necessary to understand all this. The expense was very great, and they had incurred too much already. But, no doubt, Dr. Vaucorbeil could enlighten them.

They presented themselves during his consultation hours.

"I hear you, gentlemen. What is your ailment?"

Pécuchet replied that they were not patients, and, having stated the object of their visit:

"We want to understand, in the first place, the higher atomicity."

The physician got very red, then blamed them for being desirous to learn chemistry.

"I am not denying its importance, you may be sure; but really they are shoving it in everywhere! It exercises a deplorable influence on medicine."

And the authority of his language was strengthened by the appearance of his surroundings. Over the chimney-piece trailed some diachylum and strips for binding. In the middle of the desk stood the surgical case. A

basin in a corner was full of probes, and close to the wall there was a representation of a human figure deprived of the skin.

Pécuchet complimented the doctor on it.

"It must be a lovely study, anatomy."

M. Vaucorbeil expatiated on the fascination he had formerly found in dissections; and Bouvard inquired what were the analogies between the interior of a woman and that of a man.

In order to satisfy him, the doctor fetched from his library a collection of anatomical plates.

"Take them with you! You can look at them more at your ease in your own house."

The skeleton astonished them by the prominence of the jawbone, the holes for the eyes, and the frightful length of the hands.

They stood in need of an explanatory work. They returned to M. Vaucorbeil's residence, and, thanks to the manual of Alexander Lauth, they learned the divisions of the frame, wondering at the backbone, sixteen times stronger, it is said, than if the Creator had made it straight (why sixteen times exactly?). The metacarpals drove Bouvard crazy; and Pécuchet, who was in a desperate state over the cranium, lost courage before the sphenoid, although it resembles a Turkish or "Turkesque" saddle.

As for the articulations, they were hidden under too many ligaments; so they attacked the muscles. But the insertions were not easily discovered; and when they came to the vertebral grooves they gave it up completely.

Then Pécuchet said:

"If we took up chemistry again, would not this be only utilising the laboratory?"

Bouvard protested, and he thought he had a recollection of artificial corpses being manufactured according to the custom of hot countries.

Barberou, with whom he communicated, gave him some information about the matter. For ten francs a month they could have one of the manikins of M. Auzoux; and the following week the carrier from Falaise deposited before their gate an oblong box.

Full of emotion, they carried it into the bakehouse. When the boards were unfastened, the straw fell down, the silver paper slipped off, and the anatomical figure made its appearance.

It was brick-coloured, without hair or skin, and variegated with innumerable strings, red, blue, and white. It did not look like a corpse, but rather like a kind of plaything, very ugly, very clean, and smelling of varnish.

They next took off the thorax; and they perceived the two lungs, like a pair of sponges, the heart like a big egg, slightly sidewise behind the diaphragm, the kidneys, the entire bundle of entrails.

"To work!" said Pécuchet. The day and the evening were spent at it. They had put blouses on, just as medical students do in the dissecting-rooms; and, by the light of three candles, they were working at their pieces of pasteboard, when a fist knocked at the door.

"Open!"

It was M. Foureau, followed by the keeper.

Germaine's masters were pleased to show him the manikin. She had rushed immediately to the grocer's shop to tell the thing, and the whole village now imagined that they had a real corpse concealed in their house. Foureau, yielding to the public clamour, had come to make sure about the fact. A number of persons, anxious for information, stood outside the porch.

When he entered, the manikin was lying on its side, and the muscles of the face, having been loosened, caused a monstrous protrusion, and looked frightful.

"What brings you here?" said Pécuchet.

Foureau stammered: "Nothing, nothing at all." And, taking up one of the pieces from the table, "What is this?"

"The buccinator," replied Bouvard.

Foureau said nothing, but smiled in a sly fashion, jealous of their having an amusement which he could not afford.

The two anatomists pretended to be pursuing their investigations. The people outside, getting bored with waiting, made their way into the bakehouse, and, as they began pushing one another a little, the table shook.

"Ah! this is too annoying," exclaimed Pécuchet. "Let us be rid of the public!"

The keeper made the busybodies take themselves off.

"Very well," said Bouvard; "we don't want anyone."

Foureau understood the allusion, and put it to them whether, not being medical men, they had the right to keep such an object in their possession. However, he was going to write to the prefect.

What a country district it was! There could be nothing more foolish, barbarous, and retrograde. The comparison which they instituted between themselves and the others consoled them—they felt a longing to suffer in the cause of science.

The doctor, too, came to see them. He disparaged the model as too far removed from nature, but took advantage of the occasion to give them a lecture.

Bouvard and Pécuchet were delighted; and at their request M. Vaucorbeil lent them several volumes out of his library, declaring at the same time that they would not reach the end of them. They took note of the cases of childbirth, longevity, obesity, and extraordinary constipation given in the *Dictionary of Medical Sciences*. Would that they had known the famous Canadian, De Beaumont, the polyphagi, Tarare and Bijou, the dropsical woman from the department of Eure, the Piedmontese who went every twenty days to the water-closet, Simon de Mirepoix, who was ossified at the time of his death, and that ancient mayor of Angoulême whose nose weighed three pounds!

The brain inspired them with philosophic reflections. They easily distinguished in the interior of it the *septum lucidum*, composed of two lamellæ, and the pineal gland, which is like a little red pea. But there were peduncles and ventricles, arches, columns, strata, ganglions, and fibres of all kinds, and the foramen of Pacchioni and the "body" of Paccini; in short, an inextricable mass of details, enough to wear their lives out.

Sometimes, in a fit of dizziness, they would take the figure completely to pieces, then would get perplexed about putting back each part in its proper place. This was troublesome work, especially after breakfast, and it was not long before they were both asleep, Bouvard with drooping

chin and protruding stomach, and Pécuchet with his hands over his head and both elbows on the table.

Often at that moment M. Vaucorbeil, having finished his morning rounds, would open the door.

"Well, comrades, how goes anatomy?"

"Splendidly," they would answer.

Then he would put questions to them, for the pleasure of confusing them.

When they were tired of one organ they went on to another, in this way taking up and then throwing aside the heart, the stomach, the ear, the intestines; for the pasteboard manikin bored them to death, despite their efforts to become interested in him. At last the doctor came on them suddenly, just as they were nailing him up again in his box.

"Bravo! I expected that."

At their age they could not undertake such studies; and the smile that accompanied these words wounded them deeply.

What right had he to consider them incapable? Did science belong to this gentleman, as if he were himself a very superior personage? Then, accepting his challenge, they went all the way to Bayeux to purchase books there. What they required was physiology, and a second-hand bookseller procured for them the treatises of Richerand and Adelon, celebrated at the period.

All the commonplaces as to ages, sexes, and temperaments appeared to them of the highest importance. They were much pleased to learn that there are in the tartar of the teeth three kinds of animalcules, that the seat of taste is in the tongue, and the sensation of hunger in the stomach.

In order to grasp its functions better, they regretted that they had not the faculty of ruminating, as Montègre, M. Gosse, and the brother of Gerard had; and they masticated slowly, reduced the food to pulp, and insalivated it, accompanying in thought the alimentary mass passing into their intestines, and following it with methodical scrupulosity and an almost religious attention to its final consequences.

In order to produce digestion artificially, they piled up meat in a bottle, in which was the gastric juice of a duck, and they carried it under their armpits for a fortnight, without any other result save making their

persons smell unpleasantly. You might have seen them running along the high-road in wet clothes under a burning sun. This was for the purpose of determining whether thirst is quenched by the application of water to the epidermis. They came back out of breath, both of them having caught cold.

Experiments in hearing, speech, and vision were then made in a lively fashion; but Bouvard made a show-off on the subject of generation.

Pécuchet's reserve with regard to this question had always surprised him. His friend's ignorance appeared to him so complete that Bouvard pressed him for an explanation, and Pécuchet, colouring, ended by making an avowal.

Some rascals had on one occasion dragged him into a house of ill-fame, from which he made his escape, preserving himself for the woman whom he might fall in love with some day. A fortunate opportunity had never come to him, so that, what with bashfulness, limited means, obstinacy, the force of custom, at fifty-two years, and in spite of his residence in the capital, he still possessed his virginity.

Bouvard found difficulty in believing it; then he laughed hugely, but stopped on perceiving tears in Pécuchet's eyes—for he had not been without attachments, having by turns been smitten by a rope-dancer, the sister-in-law of an architect, a bar-maid, and a young washerwoman; and the marriage had even been arranged when he had discovered that she was *enceinte* by another man.

Bouvard said to him:

"There is always a way to make up for lost time. Come—no sadness! I will take it on myself, if you like."

Pécuchet answered, with a sigh, that he need not think any more about it; and they went on with their physiology.

Is it true that the surfaces of our bodies are always letting out a subtle vapour? The proof of it is that the weight of a man is decreasing every minute. If each day what is wanting is added and what is excessive subtracted, the health would be kept in perfect equilibrium. Sanctorius, the discoverer of this law, spent half a century weighing his food every day together with its excretions, and took the weights himself, giving himself no rest, save for the purpose of writing down his computations.

They tried to imitate Sanctorius; but, as their scales could not bear the weight of both of them, it was Pécuchet who began.

He took his clothes off, in order not to impede the perspiration, and he stood on the platform of the scales perfectly naked, exposing to view, in spite of his modesty, his unusually long torso, resembling a cylinder, together with his short legs and his brown skin. Beside him, on his chair, his friend read for him:

"'Learned men maintain that animal heat is developed by the contractions of the muscles, and that it is possible by moving the thorax and the pelvic regions to raise the temperature of a warm bath.'"

Bouvard went to look for their bathing-tub, and, when everything was ready, plunged into it, provided with a thermometer. The wreckage of the distillery, swept towards the end of the room, presented in the shadow the indistinct outlines of a hillock. Every now and then they could hear the mice nibbling; there was a stale odour of aromatic plants, and finding it rather agreeable, they chatted serenely.

However, Bouvard felt a little cool.

"Move your members about!" said Pécuchet.

He moved them, without at all changing with the thermometer. "'Tis decidedly cold."

"I am not hot either," returned Pécuchet, himself seized with a fit of shivering. "But move about your pelvic regions—move them about!"

Bouvard spread open his thighs, wriggled his sides, balanced his stomach, puffed like a whale, then looked at the thermometer, which was always falling.

"I don't understand this at all! Anyhow, I am stirring myself!"

"Not enough!"

And he continued his gymnastics.

This had gone on for three hours when once more he grasped the tube.

"What! twelve degrees! Oh, good-night! I'm off to bed!"

A dog came in, half mastiff, half hound, mangy, with yellowish hair and lolling tongue.

What were they to do? There was no bell, and their housekeeper was deaf. They were quaking, but did not venture to budge, for fear of being bitten.

Pécuchet thought it a good idea to hurl threats at him, and at the same time to roll his eyes about.

Then the dog began to bark; and he jumped about the scales, in which Pécuchet, by clinging on to the cords and bending his knees, tried to raise himself up as high as ever he could.

"You're getting your death of cold up there!" said Bouvard; and he began making smiling faces at the dog, while pretending to give him things.

The dog, no doubt, understood these advances. Bouvard went so far as to caress him, stuck the animal's paws on his shoulders, and rubbed them with his finger-nails.

"Hollo! look here! there, he's off with my breeches!"

The dog cuddled himself upon them, and lay quiet.

At last, with the utmost precautions, they ventured the one to come down from the platform of the scales, and the other to get out of the bathing-tub; and when Pécuchet had got his clothes on again, he gave vent to this exclamation:

"You, my good fellow, will be of use for our experiments."

What experiments? They might inject phosphorus into him, and then shut him up in a cellar, in order to see whether he would emit fire through the nostrils.

But how were they to inject it? and furthermore, they could not get anyone to sell them phosphorus.

They thought of putting him under a pneumatic bell, of making him inhale gas, and of giving him poison to drink. All this, perhaps, would not be funny! Eventually, they thought the best thing they could do was to apply a steel magnet to his spinal marrow.

Bouvard, repressing his emotion, handed some needles on a plate to Pécuchet, who fixed them against the vertebræ. They broke, slipped, and fell on the ground. He took others, and quickly applied them at random. The dog burst his bonds, passed like a cannon-ball through the window, ran across the yard to the vestibule, and presented himself in the kitchen.

Germaine screamed when she saw him soaked with blood, and with twine round his paws.

Her masters, who had followed him, came in at the same moment. He made one spring and disappeared.

The old servant turned on them.

"This is another of your tomfooleries, I'm sure! And my kitchen, too! It's nice! This perhaps will drive him mad! People are in jail who are not as bad as you!"

They got back to the laboratory in order to examine the magnetic needles.

Not one of them had the least particle of the filings drawn off.

Then Germaine's assumption made them uneasy. He might get rabies, come back unawares, and make a dash at them.

Next day they went making inquiries everywhere, and for many years they turned up a by-path whenever they saw in the open country a dog at all resembling this one.

Their other experiments were unsuccessful. Contrary to the statements in the text-books, the pigeons which they bled, whether their stomachs were full or empty, died in the same space of time. Kittens sunk under water perished at the end of five minutes; and a goose, which they had stuffed with madder, presented periostea that were perfectly white.

The question of nutrition puzzled them.

How did it happen that the same juice is produced by bones, blood, lymph, and excrementitious materials? But one cannot follow the metamorphoses of an article of food. The man who uses only one of them is chemically equal to him who absorbs several. Vauquelin, having made a calculation of all the lime contained in the oats given as food to a hen, found a greater quantity of it in the shells of her eggs. So, then, a creation of substance takes place. In what way? Nothing is known about it.

It is not even known what is the strength of the heart. Borelli says it is what is necessary for lifting a weight of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds, while Kiell estimates it at about eight ounces; and from this they drew the conclusion that physiology is—as a well-worn phrase expresses it—the romance of medicine. As they were unable to understand it, they did not believe in it.

A month slipped away in doing nothing. Then they thought of their garden. The dead tree, displayed in the middle of it, was annoying, and accordingly, they squared it. This exercise fatigued them. Bouvard very often found it necessary to get the blacksmith to put his tools in order.

One day, as he was making his way to the forge, he was accosted by a man carrying a canvas bag on his back, who offered to sell him almanacs, pious books, holy medals, and lastly, the *Health Manual* of François Raspail.

This little book pleased him so much that he wrote to Barberou to send him the large work. Barberou sent it on, and in his letter mentioned an apothecary's shop for the prescriptions given in the work.

The simplicity of the doctrine charmed them. All diseases proceed from worms. They spoil the teeth, make the lungs hollow, enlarge the liver, ravage the intestines, and cause noises therein. The best thing for getting rid of them is camphor. Bouvard and Pécuchet adopted it. They took it in snuff, they chewed it and distributed it in cigarettes, in bottles of sedative water and pills of aloes. They even undertook the care of a hunchback. It was a child whom they had come across one fair-day. His mother, a beggar woman, brought him to them every morning. They rubbed his hump with camphorated grease, placed there for twenty minutes a mustard poultice, then covered it over with diachylum, and, in order to make sure of his coming back, gave him his breakfast.

As his mind was fixed on intestinal worms, Pécuchet noticed a singular spot on Madame Bordin's cheek. The doctor had for a long time been treating it with bitters. Round at first as a twenty-sou piece, this spot had enlarged and formed a red circle. They offered to cure it for her. She consented, but made it a condition that the ointment should be applied by Bouvard. She took a seat before the window, unfastened the upper portion of her corset, and remained with her cheek turned up, looking at him with a glance of her eye which would have been dangerous were it not for Pécuchet's presence. In the prescribed doses, and in spite of the horror felt with regard to mercury, they administered calomel. One month afterwards Madame Bordin was cured. She became a propagandist in their behalf, and the tax-collector, the mayor's

secretary, the mayor himself, and everybody in Chavignolles sucked camphor by the aid of quills.

However, the hunchback did not get straight; the collector gave up his cigarette; it stopped up his chest twice as much. Foureau made complaints that the pills of aloes gave him hemorrhoids. Bouvard got a stomachache, and Pécuchet fearful headaches. They lost confidence in Raspail, but took care to say nothing about it, fearing that they might lessen their own importance.

They now exhibited great zeal about vaccine, learned how to bleed people over cabbage leaves, and even purchased a pair of lancets.

They accompanied the doctor to the houses of the poor, and then consulted their books. The symptoms noticed by the writers were not those which they had just observed. As for the names of diseases, they were Latin, Greek, French—a medley of every language. They are to be counted by thousands; and Linnæus's system of classification, with its genera and its species, is exceedingly convenient; but how was the species to be fixed? Then they got lost in the philosophy of medicine. They raved about the life-principle of Van Helmont, vitalism, Brownism, organicism, inquired of the doctor whence comes the germ of scrofula, towards what point the infectious miasma inclines, and the means in all cases of disease to distinguish the cause from its effects.

"The cause and the effect are entangled in one another," replied Vaucorbeil.

His want of logic disgusted them—and they went by themselves to visit the sick, making their way into the houses on the pretext of philanthropy. At the further end of rooms, on dirty mattresses, lay persons with faces hanging on one side, others who had them swollen or scarlet, or lemon-coloured, or very violet-hued, with pinched nostrils, trembling mouths, rattlings in the throat, hiccoughs, perspirations, and emissions like leather or stale cheese.

They read the prescriptions of their physicians, and were surprised at the fact that anodynes are sometimes excitants, and emetics purgatives, that the same remedy suits different ailments, and that a malady may disappear under opposite systems of treatment.

Nevertheless, they gave advice, got on the moral hobby again, and had the assurance to auscultate. Their imagination began to ferment. They wrote to the king, in order that there might be established in Calvados an institute of nurses for the sick, of which they would be the professors.

They would go to the apothecary at Bayeux (the one at Falaise had always a grudge against them on account of the jujube affair), and they gave him directions to manufacture, like the ancients, *pila purgatoria*, that is to say, medicaments in the shape of pellets, which, by dint of handling, become absorbed in the individual.

In accordance with the theory that by diminishing the heat we impede the watery humours, they suspended in her armchair to the beams of the ceiling a woman suffering from meningitis, and they were swinging her with all their force when the husband, coming on the scene, kicked them out. Finally, they scandalised the curé thoroughly by introducing the new fashion of thermometers in the rectum.

Typhoid fever broke out in the neighbourhood. Bouvard declared that he would not have anything to do with it. But the wife of Gouy, their farmer, came groaning to them. Her man was a fortnight sick, and M. Vaucorbeil was neglecting him. Pécuchet devoted himself to the case.

Lenticular spots on the chest, pains in the joints, stomach distended, tongue red, these were all symptoms of dothienenteritis. Recalling the statement of Raspail that by taking away the regulation of diet the fever may be suppressed, he ordered broth and a little meat.

The doctor suddenly made his appearance. His patient was on the point of eating, with two pillows behind his back, between his wife and Pécuchet, who were sustaining him. He drew near the bed, and flung the plate out through the window, exclaiming:

"This is a veritable murder!"

"Why?"

"You perforate the intestine, since typhoid fever is an alteration of its follicular membrane."

"Not always!"

And a dispute ensued as to the nature of fevers. Pécuchet believed that they were essential in themselves; Vaucorbeil made them dependent on our bodily organs.

"Therefore, I remove everything that might excite them excessively."

"But regimen weakens the vital principle."

"What twaddle are you talking with your vital principle? What is it? Who has seen it?"

Pécuchet got confused.

"Besides," said the physician, "Gouy does not want food."

The patient made a gesture of assent under his cotton nightcap.

"No matter, he requires it!"

"Not a bit! his pulse is at ninety-eight!"

"What matters about his pulse?" And Pécuchet proceeded to give authorities.

"Let systems alone!" said the doctor.

Pécuchet folded his arms. "So then, you are an empiric?"

"By no means; but by observing——"

"But if one observes badly?"

Vaucorbeil took this phrase for an allusion to Madame Bordin's skin eruption—a story about which the widow had made a great outcry, and the recollection of which irritated him.

"To start with, it is necessary to have practised."

"Those who revolutionised the science did not practise—Van Helmont, Boerhaave, Broussais himself."

Without replying, Vaucorbeil stooped towards Gouy, and raising his voice:

"Which of us two do you select as your doctor?"

Mutually becoming afflicted, they looked at their tongues

The patient, who was falling asleep, perceived angry faces, and began to blubber. His wife did not know either what answer to make, for the one was clever, but the other had perhaps a secret.

"Very well," said Vaucorbeil, "since you hesitate between a man furnished with a diploma——"

Pécuchet sneered.

"Why do you laugh?"

"Because a diploma is not always an argument."

The doctor saw himself attacked in his means of livelihood, in his prerogative, in his social importance. His wrath gave itself full vent.

"We shall see that when you are brought up before the courts for illegally practising medicine!" Then, turning round to the farmer's wife, "Get him killed by this gentleman at your ease, and I'm hanged if ever I come back to your house!"

And he dashed past the beech trees, shaking his walking-stick as he went.

When Pécuchet returned, Bouvard was himself in a very excited state. He had just had a visit from Foureau, who was exasperated about his hemorrhoids. Vainly had he contended that they were a safeguard against every disease. Foureau, who would listen to nothing, had threatened him with an action for damages. He lost his head over it.

Pécuchet told him the other story, which he considered more serious, and was a little shocked at Bouvard's indifference.

Gouy, next day, had a pain in his abdomen. This might be due to the ingestion of the food. Perhaps Vaucorbeil was not mistaken. A physician, after all, ought to have some knowledge of this! And a feeling of remorse took possession of Pécuchet! He was afraid lest he might turn out a homicide.

For prudence' sake they sent the hunchback away. But his mother cried a great deal at his losing the breakfast, not to speak of the infliction of having made them come every day from Barneval to Chavignolles.

Foureau calmed down, and Gouy recovered his strength. At the present moment the cure was certain. A success like this emboldened Pécuchet.

"If we studied obstetrics with the aid of one of these manikins——"

"Enough of manikins!"

"There are half-bodies made with skin invented for the use of students of midwifery. It seems to me that I could turn over the fœtus!"

But Bouvard was tired of medicine.

"The springs of life are hidden from us, the ailments too numerous, the remedies problematical. No reasonable definitions are to be found in the authors of health, disease, diathesis, or even pus."

However, all this reading had disturbed their brains.

Bouvard, whenever he caught a cold, imagined he was getting inflammation of the lungs. When leeches did not abate a stitch in the side, he had recourse to a blister, whose action affected the kidneys. Then he fancied he had an attack of stone.

Pécuchet caught lumbago while lopping the elm trees, and vomited after his dinner—a circumstance which frightened him very much. Then, noticing that his colour was rather yellow, suspected a liver complaint, and asked himself, "Have I pains?" and ended by having them.

Mutually becoming afflicted, they looked at their tongues, felt each other's pulses, made a change as to the use of mineral waters, purged themselves—and dreaded cold, heat, wind, rain, flies, and principally currents of air.

Pécuchet imagined that taking snuff was fatal. Besides, sneezing sometimes causes the rupture of an aneurism; and so he gave up the snuff-box altogether. From force of habit he would thrust his fingers into it, then suddenly become conscious of his imprudence.

As black coffee shakes the nerves, Bouvard wished to give up his half cup; but he used to fall asleep after his meals, and was afraid when he woke up, for prolonged sleep is a foreboding of apoplexy.

Their ideal was Cornaro, that Venetian gentleman who by the regulation of his diet attained to an extreme old age. Without actually imitating him, they might take the same precautions; and Pécuchet took down from his bookshelves a *Manual of Hygiene* by Doctor Morin.

"How had they managed to live till now?"

Their favourite dishes were there prohibited. Germaine, in a state of perplexity, did not know any longer what to serve up to them.

Every kind of meat had its inconveniences. Puddings and sausages, red herrings, lobsters, and game are "refractory." The bigger a fish is, the more gelatine it contains, and consequently the heavier it is. Vegetables cause acidity, macaroni makes people dream; cheeses, "considered generally, are difficult of digestion." A glass of water in the morning is "dangerous." Everything you eat or drink being accompanied by a similar warning, or rather by these words: "Bad!" "Beware of the abuse of it!" "Does not suit everyone!" Why bad? Wherein is the abuse of it? How are you to know whether a thing like this suits you?

What a problem was that of breakfast! They gave up coffee and milk on account of its detestable reputation, and, after that, chocolate, for it is "a mass of indigestible substances." There remained, then, tea. But "nervous persons ought to forbid themselves the use of it completely." Yet Decker, in the seventeenth century, prescribed twenty decalitres of it a day, in order to cleanse the spongy parts of the pancreas.

This direction shook Morin in their estimation, the more so as he condemns every kind of head-dress, hats, women's caps, and men's caps—a requirement which was revolting to Pécuchet.

Then they purchased Becquerel's treatise, in which they saw that pork is in itself "a good aliment," tobacco "perfectly harmless in its character," and coffee "indispensable to military men."

Up to that time they had believed in the unhealthiness of damp places. Not at all! Casper declares them less deadly than others. One does not bathe in the sea without refreshing one's skin. Bégin advises people to cast themselves into it while they are perspiring freely. Wine taken neat after soup is considered excellent for the stomach; Levy lays the blame on it of impairing the teeth. Lastly, the flannel waistcoat—that safeguard, that preserver of health, that palladium cherished by Bouvard and inherent to Pécuchet, without any evasions or fear of the opinions of others—is considered unsuitable by some authors for men of a plethoric and sanguine temperament!

What, then, is hygiene? "Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side," M. Levy asserts; and Becquerel adds that it is not a science.

So then they ordered for their dinner oysters, a duck, pork and cabbage, cream, a Pont l'Evêque cheese, and a bottle of Burgundy. It was an enfranchisement, almost a revenge; and they laughed at Cornaro! It was only an imbecile that could be tyrannised over as he had been! What vileness to be always thinking about prolonging one's existence! Life is good only on the condition that it is enjoyed.

"Another piece?"

"Yes, I will."

"So will I."

"Your health."

"Yours."

"And let us laugh at the rest of the world."

They became elated. Bouvard announced that he wanted three cups of coffee, though he was not a military man. Pécuchet, with his cap over his ears, took pinch after pinch, and sneezed without fear; and, feeling the need of a little champagne, they ordered Germaine to go at once to the wine-shop to buy a bottle of it. The village was too far away; she refused. Pécuchet got indignant:

"I command you—understand!—I command you to hurry off there."

She obeyed, but, grumbling, resolved soon to have done with her masters; they were so incomprehensible and fantastic.

Then, as in former days, they went to drink their coffee and brandy on the hillock.

The harvest was just over, and the stacks in the middle of the fields rose in dark heaps against the tender blue of a calm night. Nothing was astir about the farms. Even the crickets were no longer heard. The fields were all wrapped in sleep.

The pair digested while they inhaled the breeze which blew refreshingly against their cheeks.

Above, the sky was covered with stars; some shone in clusters, others in a row, or rather alone, at certain distances from each other. A zone of luminous dust, extending from north to south, bifurcated above their heads. Amid these splendours there were vast empty spaces, and the firmament seemed a sea of azure with archipelagoes and islets.

"What a quantity!" exclaimed Bouvard.

"We do not see all," replied Pécuchet. "Behind the Milky Way are the nebulæ, and behind the nebulæ, stars still; the most distant is separated from us by three millions of myriamètres."

He had often looked into the telescope of the Place Vendôme, and he recalled the figures.

"The sun is a million times bigger than the earth; Sirius is twelve times the size of the sun; comets measure thirty-four millions of leagues."

"'Tis enough to make one crazy!" said Bouvard.

He lamented his ignorance, and even regretted that he had not been in his youth at the Polytechnic School.

Then Pécuchet, turning him in the direction of the Great Bear, showed him the polar star; then Cassiopeia, whose constellation forms a Y; Vega, of the Lyra constellation—all scintillating; and at the lower part of the horizon, the red Aldebaran.

Bouvard, with his head thrown back, followed with difficulty the angles, quadrilaterals, and pentagons, which it is necessary to imagine in order to make yourself at home in the sky.

Pécuchet went on:

"The swiftness of light is eighty thousand leagues a second; one ray of the Milky Way takes six centuries to reach us; so that a star at the moment we observe it may have disappeared. Several are intermittent; others never come back; and they change positions. Every one of them is in motion; every one of them is passing on."

"However, the sun is motionless."

"It was believed to be so formerly. But to-day men of science declare that it rushes towards the constellation of Hercules!"

This put Bouvard's ideas out of order—and, after a minute's reflection:

"Science is constructed according to the data furnished by a corner of space. Perhaps it does not agree with all the rest that we are ignorant of, which is much vaster, and which we cannot discover."

So they talked, standing on the hillock, in the light of the stars; and their conversation was interrupted by long intervals of silence.

At last they asked one another whether there were men in the stars. Why not? And as creation is harmonious, the inhabitants of Sirius ought to be gigantic, those of Mars of middle stature, those of Venus very small. Unless it should be everywhere the same thing. There are merchants up there, and gendarmes; they trade there; they fight there; they dethrone kings there.

Some shooting stars slipped suddenly, describing on the sky, as it were, the parabola of an enormous rocket.

"Stop!" said Bouvard; "here are vanishing worlds."

Pécuchet replied:

"If ours, in its turn, kicks the bucket, the citizens of the stars will not be more moved than we are now. Ideas like this may pull down your pride."

"What is the object of all this?"

"Perhaps it has no object."

"However——" And Pécuchet repeated two or three times "however," without finding anything more to say.

"No matter. I should very much like to know how the universe is made."

"That should be in Buffon," returned Bouvard, whose eyes were closing.

"I am not equal to any more of it. I am going to bed."

The *Epoques de la Nature* informed them that a comet by knocking against the sun had detached one portion of it, which became the earth. First, the poles had cooled; all the waters had enveloped the globe; they subsided into the caverns; then the continents separated from each other, and the beasts and man appeared.

The majesty of creation engendered in them an amazement infinite as itself. Their heads got enlarged. They were proud of reflecting on such lofty themes.

The minerals ere long proved wearisome to them, and for distraction they sought refuge in the *Harmonies* of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.

Vegetable and terrestrial harmonies, aërial, aquatic, human, fraternal, and even conjugal—every one of them is here dealt with, not omitting the invocations to Venus, to the Zephyrs, and to the Loves. They exhibited astonishment at fishes having fins, birds wings, seeds an envelope; full of that philosophy which discovers virtuous intentions in Nature, and regards her as a kind of St. Vincent de Paul, always occupied in performing acts of benevolence.

Then they wondered at her prodigies, the water-spouts, the volcanoes, the virgin forests; and they bought M. Depping's work on the *Marvels and Beauties of Nature in France*. Cantal possesses three of them, Hérault five, Burgundy two—no more, while Dauphiné reckons for itself alone up to fifteen marvels. But soon we shall find no more of them. The grottoes with stalactites are stopped up; the burning mountains are

extinguished; the natural ice-houses have become heated; and the old trees in which they said mass are falling under the leveller's axe, or are on the point of dying.

Their curiosity next turned towards the beasts.

They re-opened their Buffon, and got into ecstasies over the strange tastes of certain animals.

But all the books are not worth one personal observation. They hurried out into the farmyard, and asked the labourers whether they had seen bulls consorting with mares, hogs seeking after cows, and the males of partridges doing strange things among themselves.

"Never in their lives." They thought such questions even a little queer for gentlemen of their age.

They took a fancy to try abnormal unions. The least difficult is that of the he-goat and the ewe. Their farmer had not a he-goat in his possession; a neighbour lent his, and, as it was the period of rutting, they shut the two beasts up in the press, concealing themselves behind the casks in order that the event might be quietly accomplished.

Each first ate a little heap of hay; then they ruminated; the ewe lay down, and she bleated continuously, while the he-goat, standing erect on his crooked legs, with his big beard and his drooping ears, fixed on her his eyes, which glittered in the shade.

At length, on the evening of the third day, they deemed it advisable to assist nature, but the goat, turning round on Pécuchet, hit him in the lower part of the stomach with his horns. The ewe, seized with fear, began turning about in the press as if in a riding-school. Bouvard ran after her, threw himself on top of her to hold her, and fell on the ground with both hands full of wool.

They renewed their experiments on hens and a drake, on a mastiff and a sow, in the hope that monsters might be the result, not understanding anything about the question of species.

This word denotes a group of individuals whose descendants reproduce themselves, but animals classed as of different species may possess the power of reproduction, while others comprised in the same species have lost the capacity. They flattered themselves that they would

obtain clear ideas on this subject by studying the development of germs; and Pécuchet wrote to Dumouchel in order to get a microscope.

By turns they put on the glass surface hairs, tobacco, finger-nails, and a fly's claw, but they forgot the drop of water which is indispensable; at other times it was the little lamel, and they pushed each other forward, and put the instrument out of order; then, when they saw only a haze, they blamed the optician. They went so far as to have doubts about the microscope. Perhaps the discoveries that have been attributed to it are not so certain?

Dumouchel, in sending on the invoice to them, begged of them to collect on his account some serpent-stones and sea-urchins, of which he had always been an admirer, and which were commonly found in country districts. In order to interest them in geology he sent them the *Lettres* of Bertrand with the *Discours* of Cuvier on the revolutions of the globe.

After the perusal of these two works they imagined the following state of things:

First, an immense sheet of water, from which emerged promontories speckled with lichens, and not one human being, not one sound. It was a world silent, motionless, and bare; there long plants swayed to and fro in a fog that resembled the vapour of a sweating-room. A red sun overheated the humid atmosphere. Then volcanoes burst forth; the igneous rocks sent up mountains of liquid flame, and the paste of the streaming porphyry and basalt began to congeal. Third picture: in shallow seas have sprung up isles of madrepore; a cluster of palm trees overhangs them here and there. There are shells like carriage wheels, tortoises three metres in length, lizards of sixty feet; amphibians stretch out amid the reeds their ostrich necks and crocodile jaws; winged serpents fly about. Finally, on the large continents, huge mammifers make their appearance, their limbs misshapen, like pieces of wood badly squared, their hides thicker than plates of bronze, or else shaggy, thick-lipped, with manes and crooked fangs. Flocks of mammoths browsed on the plains where, since, the Atlantic has been; the paleotherium, half horse, half tapir, overturned with his tumbling the ant-hills of Montmartre; and the *cervus giganteus* trembled under the chestnut trees

at the growls of the bears of the caverns, who made the dog of Beaugency, three times as big as a wolf, yelp in his den.

All these periods had been separated from one another by cataclysms, of which the latest is our Deluge. It was like a drama of fairyland in several acts, with man for apotheosis.

They were astounded when they learned that there existed on stones imprints of dragon-flies and birds' claws; and, having run through one of the Roret manuals, they looked out for fossils.

One afternoon, as they were turning over some flints in the middle of the high-road, the curé passed, and, accosting them in a wheedling tone:

"These gentlemen are busying themselves with geology. Very good."

For he held this science in esteem. It confirmed the authority of the Scriptures by proving the fact of the Deluge.

Bouvard talked about coprolites, which are animals' excrements in a petrified state.

The Abbé Jeufroy appeared surprised at the matter. After all, if it were so, it was a reason the more for wondering at Providence.

Pécuchet confessed that, up to the present, their inquiries had not been fruitful; and yet the environs of Falaise, like all Jurassic soils, should abound in remains of animals.

"I have been told," replied the Abbé Jeufroy, "that the jawbone of an elephant was at one time found at Villers."

However, one of his friends, M. Larsoneur, advocate, member of the bar at Lisieux, and archæologist, would probably supply them with information about it. He had written a history of Port-en-Bessin, in which the discovery of an alligator was noticed.

Bouvard and Pécuchet exchanged glances: the same hope took possession of both; and, in spite of the heat, they remained standing a long time questioning the ecclesiastic, who sheltered himself from the sun under a blue cotton umbrella. The lower part of his face was rather heavy, and his nose was pointed. He was perpetually smiling, or bent his head while he closed his eyelids.

The church-bell rang the Angelus.

"A very good evening, gentlemen! You will allow me, will you not?"

At his suggestion they waited three weeks for Larsoneur's reply. At length it arrived.

The name of the man who had dug up the tooth of the mastodon was Louis Bloche. Details were wanting. As to his history, it was comprised in one of the volumes of the Lisieux Academy, and he could not lend his own copy, as he was afraid of spoiling the collection. With regard to the alligator, it had been discovered in the month of November, , under the cliff of the Hachettes of Sainte-Honorine, near Port-en-Bessin, in the arrondissement of Bayeux. His compliments followed.

The obscurity that enshrouded the mastodon provoked in Pécuchet's mind a longing to search for it. He would fain have gone to Villers forthwith.

Bouvard objected that, to save themselves a possibly useless and certainly expensive journey, it would be desirable to make inquiries. So they wrote a letter to the mayor of the district, in which they asked him what had become of one Louis Bloche. On the assumption of his death, his descendants or collateral relations might be able to enlighten them as to his precious discovery, when he made it, and in what public place in the township this testimony of primitive times was deposited? Were there any prospects of finding similar ones? What was the cost of a man and a car for a day?

And vainly did they make application to the deputy-mayor, and then to the first municipal councillor. They received no news from Villers. No doubt the inhabitants were jealous about their fossils—unless they had sold them to the English. The journey to the Hachettes was determined upon.

Bouvard and Pécuchet took the public conveyance from Falaise to Caen. Then a covered car brought them from Caen to Bayeux; from Bayeux, they walked to Port-en-Bessin.

They had not been deceived. There were curious stones alongside the Hachettes; and, assisted by the directions of the innkeeper, they succeeded in reaching the strand.

The tide was low. It exposed to view all its shingles, with a prairie of sea-wrack as far as the edge of the waves. Grassy slopes cut the cliff, which was composed of soft brown earth that had hardened and become

in its lower strata a rampart of greyish stone. Tiny streams of water kept flowing down incessantly, while in the distance the sea rumbled. It seemed sometimes to suspend its throbbing, and then the only sound heard was the murmur of the little springs.

They staggered over the sticky soil, or rather they had to jump over holes.

Bouvard sat down on a mound overlooking the sea and contemplated the waves, thinking of nothing, fascinated, inert. Pécuchet brought him over to the side of the cliff to show him a serpent-stone incrusted in the rock, like a diamond in its gangue. It broke their nails; they would require instruments; besides, night was coming on. The sky was empurpled towards the west, and the entire sea-shore was wrapped in shadow. In the midst of the blackish wrack the pools of water were growing wider. The sea was coming towards them. It was time to go back.

Next day, at dawn, with a mattock and a pick, they made an attack on their fossil, whose covering cracked. It was an ammonite nodosus, corroded at the ends but weighing quite six pounds; and in his enthusiasm Pécuchet exclaimed:

"We cannot do less than present it to Dumouchel!"

They next chanced upon sponges, lampshells, orks—but no alligator. In default of it, they were hoping to get the backbone of a hippopotamus or an ichthyosaurus, the bones of any animals whatever that were contemporaneous with the Deluge, when they discovered against the cliff, at a man's height, outlines which assumed the form of a gigantic fish.

They deliberated as to the means by which they could get possession of it. Bouvard would extricate it at the top, while Pécuchet beneath would demolish the rock in order to make it descend gently without spoiling it.

Just as they were taking breath they saw above their heads a custom-house officer in a cloak, who was gesticulating with a commanding air.

"Well! What! Let us alone!" And they went on with their work, Bouvard on the tips of his toes, trapping with his mattock, Pécuchet, with his back bent, digging with his pick.

But the custom-house officer reappeared farther down, in an open space between the rocks, making repeated signals. They treated him with contempt. An oval body bulged out under the thinned soil, and sloped down, was on the point of slipping.

Suddenly another individual, with a sabre, presented himself.

"Your passports?"

It was the field-guard on his rounds, and, at the same instant, the man from the custom-house came up, having hastened through a ravine.

"Take them into custody for me, Père Morin, or the cliff will fall in!"

"It is for a scientific object," replied Pécuchet.

Then a mass of stone fell, grazing them all four so closely that a little more and they were dead men.

When the dust was scattered, they recognised the mast of a ship, which crumbled under the custom-house officer's boot.

Bouvard said with a sigh, "We did no great harm!"

"One should not do anything within the fortification limits," returned the guard.

"In the first place, who are you, in order that I may take out a summons against you?"

Pécuchet refused to give his name, cried out against such injustice.

"Don't argue! follow me!"

As soon as they reached the port a crowd of ragamuffins ran after them. Bouvard, red as a poppy, put on an air of dignity; Pécuchet, exceedingly pale, darted furious looks around; and these two strangers, carrying stones in their pocket-handkerchiefs, did not present a good appearance. Provisionally, they put them up at the inn, whose master on the threshold guarded the entrance. Then the mason came to demand back his tools. They were paying him for them, and still there were incidental expenses!—and the field-guard did not come back! Wherefore? At last, a gentleman, who wore the cross of the Legion of Honour, set them free, and they went away, after giving their Christian names, surnames, and their domicile, with an undertaking on their part to be more circumspect in future.

Besides a passport, they were in need of many things, and before undertaking fresh explorations they consulted the *Geological Traveller's*

Guide, by Boné. It was necessary to have, in the first place, a good soldier's knapsack, then a surveyor's chain, a file, a pair of nippers, a compass, and three hammers, passed into a belt, which is hidden under the frock-coat, and "thus preserves you from that original appearance which one ought to avoid on a journey." As for the stick, Pécuchet freely adopted the tourist's stick, six feet high, with a long iron point. Bouvard preferred the walking-stick umbrella, or many-branched umbrella, the knob of which is removed in order to clasp on the silk, which is kept separately in a little bag. They did not forget strong shoes with gaiters, "two pairs of braces" each "on account of perspiration," and, although one cannot present himself everywhere in a cap, they shrank from the expense of "one of those folding hats, which bear the name of 'Gibus,' their inventor."

The same work gives precepts for conduct: "To know the language of the part of the country you visit": they knew it. "To preserve a modest deportment": this was their custom. "Not to have too much money about you": nothing simpler. Finally, in order to spare yourself embarrassments of all descriptions, it is a good thing to adopt the "description of engineer."

"Well, we will adopt it."

Thus prepared, they began their excursions; were sometimes eight days away, and passed their lives in the open air.

Sometimes they saw, on the banks of the Orne, in a rent, pieces of rock raising their slanting surfaces between some poplar trees and heather; or else they were grieved by meeting, for the entire length of the road, nothing but layers of clay. In the presence of a landscape they admired neither the series of perspectives nor the depth of the backgrounds, nor the undulations of the green surfaces; but that which was not visible to them, the underpart, the earth: and for them every hill was only a fresh proof of the Deluge.

To the Deluge mania succeeded that of erratic blocks. The big stones alone in the fields must come from vanished glaciers, and they searched for moraines and faluns.

They were several times taken for pedlars on account of their equipage; and when they had answered that they were "engineers," a

dread seized them—the usurpation of such a title might entail unpleasant consequences.

At the end of each day they panted beneath the weight of their specimens; but they dauntlessly carried them off home with them. They were deposited on the doorsteps, on the stairs, in the bedrooms, in the dining-room, and in the kitchen; and Germaine used to make a hubbub about the quantity of dust. It was no slight task, before pasting on the labels, to know the names of the rocks; the variety of colours and of grain made them confuse argil and marl, granite and gneiss, quartz and limestone.

And the nomenclature plagued them. Why Devonian, Cambrian, Jurassic—as if the portions of the earth designated by these names were not in other places as well as in Devonshire, near Cambridge, and in the Jura? It was impossible to know where you are there. That which is a system for one is for another a stratum, for a third a mere layer. The plates of the layers get intermingled and entangled in one another; but Omalius d'Halloy warns you not to believe in geological divisions.

This statement was a relief to them; and when they had seen coral limestones in the plain of Caen, phillades at Balleroy, kaolin at St. Blaise, and oolite everywhere, and searched for coal at Cartigny and for mercury at Chapelle-en-Juger, near St. Lô, they decided on a longer excursion: a journey to Havre, to study the fire-resisting quartz and the clay of Kimmeridge.

As soon as they had stepped out of the packet-boat they asked what road led under the lighthouses.

Landslips blocked up the way; it was dangerous to venture along it.

A man who let out vehicles accosted them, and offered them drives around the neighbourhood—Ingouville, Octeville, Fécamp, Lillebonne, "Rome, if it was necessary."

His charges were preposterous, but the name of Falaise had struck them. By turning off the main road a little, they could see Étretat, and they took the coach that started from Fécamp to go to the farthest point first.

In the vehicle Bouvard and Pécuchet had a conversation with three peasants, two old women, and a seminarist, and did not hesitate to style themselves engineers.

They stopped in front of the bay. They gained the cliff, and five minutes after, rubbed up against it to avoid a big pool of water which was advancing like a gulf stream in the middle of the sea-shore. Then they saw an archway which opened above a deep grotto; it was sonorous and very bright, like a church, with descending columns and a carpet of sea-wrack all along its stone flooring.

This work of nature astonished them, and as they went on their way collecting shells, they started considerations as to the origin of the world.

Bouvard inclined towards Neptunism; Pécuchet, on the contrary, was a Plutonist.

"The central fire had broken the crust of the globe, heaved up the masses of earth, and made fissures. It is, as it were, an interior sea, which has its flow and ebb, its tempests; a thin film separates us from it. We could not sleep if we thought of all that is under our heels. However, the central fire diminishes, and the sun grows more feeble, so much so that one day the earth will perish of refrigeration. It will become sterile; all the wood and all the coal will be converted into carbonic acid, and no life can subsist there."

"We haven't come to that yet," said Bouvard.

"Let us expect it," returned Pécuchet.

No matter, this end of the world, far away as it might be, made them gloomy; and, side by side, they walked in silence over the shingles.

The cliff, perpendicular, a mass of white, striped with black here and there by lines of flint, stretched towards the horizon like the curve of a rampart five leagues wide. An east wind, bitter and cold, was blowing; the sky was grey; the sea greenish and, as it were, swollen. From the highest points of rocks birds took wing, wheeled round, and speedily re-entered their hiding places. Sometimes a stone, getting loosened, would rebound from one place to another before reaching them.

Pécuchet continued his reflections aloud:

"Unless the earth should be destroyed by a cataclysm! We do not know the length of our period. The central fire has only to overflow."

"However, it is diminishing."

"That does not prevent its explosions from having produced the Julia Island, Monte Nuovo, and many others."

Bouvard remembered having read these details in Bertrand.

"But such catastrophes do not happen in Europe."

"A thousand pardons! Witness that of Lisbon. As for our own countries, the coal-mines and the firestone useful for war are numerous, and may very well, when decomposing, form the mouths of volcanoes. Moreover, the volcanoes always burst near the sea."

Bouvard cast his eyes over the waves, and fancied he could distinguish in the distance a volume of smoke ascending to the sky.

"Since the Julia Island," returned Pécuchet, "has disappeared, the fragments of the earth formed by the same cause will perhaps have the same fate. An islet in the Archipelago is as important as Normandy and even as Europe."

Bouvard imagined Europe swallowed up in an abyss.

"Admit," said Pécuchet, "that an earthquake takes place under the British Channel: the waters rush into the Atlantic; the coasts of France and England, tottering on their bases, bend forward and reunite—and there you are! The entire space between is wiped out."

Instead of answering, Bouvard began walking so quickly that he was soon a hundred paces away from Pécuchet. Being alone, the idea of a cataclysm disturbed him. He had eaten nothing since morning; his temples were throbbing. All at once the soil appeared to him to be shaking, and the cliff over his head to be bending forward at its summit. At that moment a shower of gravel rolled down from the top of it. Pécuchet observed him scampering off wildly, understood his fright, and cried from a distance:

"Stop! stop! The period is not completed!"

And in order to overtake him he made enormous bounds with the aid of his tourist's stick, all the while shouting out:

"The period is not completed! The period is not completed!"

Bouvard, in a mad state, kept running without stopping. The many-branched umbrella fell down, the skirts of his coat were flying, the knapsack was tossing on his back. He was like a tortoise with wings

about to gallop amongst the rocks. One bigger than the rest concealed him from view.

Pécuchet reached the spot out of breath, saw nobody, then returned in order to gain the fields through a defile, which Bouvard, no doubt, had taken.

This narrow ascent was cut by four great steps in the cliff, as lofty as the heights of two men, and glittering like polished alabaster.

At an elevation of fifty feet Pécuchet wished to descend; but as the sea was dashing against him in front, he set about clambering up further. At the second turning, when he beheld the empty space, terror froze him. As he approached the third, his legs were becoming weak. Volumes of air vibrated around him, a cramp gripped his epigastrium; he sat down on the ground, with eyes closed, no longer having consciousness of aught save the beatings of his own heart, which were suffocating him; then he flung his tourist's stick on the ground, and on his hands and knees resumed his ascent. But the three hammers attached to his belt began to press against his stomach; the stones with which he had crammed his pockets knocked against his sides; the peak of his cap blinded him; the wind increased in violence. At length he reached the upper ground, and there found Bouvard, who had ascended higher through a less difficult defile. A cart picked them up. They forgot all about Étretat.

The next evening, at Havre, while waiting for the packet-boat, they saw at the tail-end of a newspaper, a short scientific essay headed, "On the Teaching of Geology." This article, full of facts, explained the subject as it was understood at the period.

"There has never been a complete cataclysm of the globe, but the same space has not always the same duration, and is exhausted more quickly in one place than in another. Lands of the same age contain different fossils, just as depositaries very far distant from each other enclose similar ones. The ferns of former times are identical with the ferns of to-day. Many contemporary zoophytes are found again in the most ancient layers. To sum up, actual modifications explain former convulsions. The same causes are always in operation; Nature does not

proceed by leaps; and the periods, Brogniart asserts, are, after all, only abstractions."

Cuvier's work up to this time had appeared to them surrounded with the glory of an aureola at the summit of an incontestable science. It was sapped. Creation had no longer the same discipline, and their respect for this great man diminished.

From biographies and extracts they learned something of the doctrines of Lamarck and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire.

All that was contrary to accepted ideas, the authority of the Church.

Bouvard experienced relief as if from a broken yoke. "I should like to see now what answer Citizen Jeufroy would make to me about the Deluge!"

They found him in his little garden, where he was awaiting the members of the vestry, who were to meet presently with a view to the purchase of a chasuble.

"These gentlemen wish for——?"

"An explanation, if you please."

And Bouvard began, "What means, in Genesis, 'The abyss which was broken up,' and 'The cataracts of heaven?' For an abyss does not get broken up, and heaven has no cataracts."

The abbé closed his eyelids, then replied that it was always necessary to distinguish between the sense and the letter. Things which shock you at first, turn out right when they are sifted.

"Very well, but how do you explain the rain which passed over the highest mountains—those that are two leagues in height. Just think of it! Two leagues!—a depth of water that makes two leagues!"

And the mayor, coming up, added:

"Bless my soul! What a bath!"

"Admit," said Bouvard, "that Moses exaggerates like the devil."

The curé had read Bonald, and answered:

"I am ignorant of his motives; it was, no doubt, to inspire a salutary fear in the people of whom he was the leader."

"Finally, this mass of water—where did it come from?"

"How do I know? The air was changed into water, just as happens every day."

Through the garden gate they saw M. Girbal, superintendent of taxes, making his way in, together with Captain Heurtaux, a landowner; and Beljambe, the innkeeper, appeared, assisting with his arm Langlois, the grocer, who walked with difficulty on account of his catarrh.

Pécuchet, without bestowing a thought on them, took up the argument:

"Excuse me, M. Jeufroy. The weight of the atmosphere, science demonstrates to us, is equal to that of a mass of water which would make a covering of ten metres around the globe. Consequently, if all the air that had been condensed fell down in a liquid state, it would augment very little the mass of existing waters."

The vestrymen opened their eyes wide, and listened.

The curé lost patience. "Will you deny that shells have been found on the mountains? What put them there, if not the Deluge? They are not accustomed, I believe, to grow out of the ground of themselves alone, like carrots!" And this joke having made the assembly laugh, he added, pressing his lips together: "Unless this be another discovery of science!"

Bouvard was pleased to reply by referring to the rising of mountains, the theory of Elie de Beaumont.

"Don't know him," returned the abbé.

Foureau hastened to explain: "He is from Caen. I have seen him at the Prefecture."

"But if your Deluge," Bouvard broke in again, "had sent shells drifting, they would be found broken on the surface, and not at depths of three hundred metres sometimes."

The priest fell back on the truth of the Scriptures, the tradition of the human race, and the animals discovered in the ice in Siberia.

"That does not prove that man existed at the time they did."

The earth, in Pécuchet's view, was much older. "The delta of the Mississippi goes back to tens of thousands of years. The actual epoch is a hundred thousand, at least. The lists of Manetho——"

The Count de Faverges appeared on the scene. They were all silent at his approach.

"Go on, pray. What were you talking about?"

"These gentlemen are wrangling with me," replied the abbé.

"About what?"

"About Holy Writ, M. le Comte."

Bouvard immediately pleaded that they had a right, as geologists, to discuss religion.

"Take care," said the count; "you know the phrase, my dear sir, 'A little science takes us away from it, a great deal leads us back to it'?" And in a tone at the same time haughty and paternal: "Believe me, you will come back to it! you will come back to it!"

"Perhaps so. But what were we to think of a book in which it is pretended that the light was created before the sun? as if the sun were not the sole cause of light!"

"You forget the light which we call boreal," said the ecclesiastic.

Bouvard, without answering this point, strongly denied that light could be on one side and darkness on the other, that evening and morning could have existed when there were no stars, or that the animals made their appearance suddenly, instead of being formed by crystallisation.

As the walks were too narrow, while gesticulating, they trod on the flower-borders. Langlois took a fit of coughing.

The captain exclaimed: "You are revolutionaries!"

Girbal: "Peace! peace!"

The priest: "What materialism!"

Foureau: "Let us rather occupy ourselves with our chasuble!"

"No! let me speak!" And Bouvard, growing more heated, went on to say that man was descended from the ape!

All the vestrymen looked at each other, much amazed, and as if to assure themselves that they were not apes.

Bouvard went on: "By comparing the fœtus of a woman, of a bitch, of a bird, of a frog——"

"Enough!"

"For my part, I go farther!" cried Pécuchet. "Man is descended from the fishes!"

There was a burst of laughter. But without being disturbed:

"The *Telliamed*—an Arab book——"

"Come, gentlemen, let us hold our meeting."

And they entered the sacristy.

The two comrades had not given the Abbé Jeufroy such a fall as they expected; therefore, Pécuchet found in him "the stamp of Jesuitism." His "boreal light," however, caused them uneasiness. They searched for it in Orbigny's manual.

"This is a hypothesis to explain why the vegetable fossils of Baffin's Bay resemble the Equatorial plants. We suppose, in place of the sun, a great luminous source of heat which has now disappeared, and of which the Aurora Borealis is but perhaps a vestige."

Then a doubt came to them as to what proceeds from man, and, in their perplexity, they thought of Vaucorbeil.

He had not followed up his threats. As of yore, he passed every morning before their grating, striking all the bars with his walking-stick one after the other.

Bouvard watched him, and, having stopped him, said he wanted to submit to him a curious point in anthropology.

"Do you believe that the human race is descended from fishes?"

"What nonsense!"

"From apes rather—isn't that so?"

"Directly, that is impossible!"

On whom could they depend? For, in fact, the doctor was not a Catholic!

They continued their studies, but without enthusiasm, being weary of eocene and miocene, of Mount Jurillo, of the Julia Island, of the mammoths of Siberia and of the fossils, invariably compared in all the authors to "medals which are authentic testimonies," so much so that one day Bouvard threw his knapsack on the ground, declaring that he would not go any farther.

"Geology is too defective. Some parts of Europe are hardly known. As for the rest, together with the foundation of the oceans, we shall always be in a state of ignorance on the subject."

Finally, Pécuchet having pronounced the word "mineral kingdom":

"I don't believe in it, this mineral kingdom, since organic substances have taken part in the formation of flint, of chalk, and perhaps of gold. Hasn't the diamond been charcoal; coal a collection of vegetables? and by heating it to I know not how many degrees, we get the sawdust of

wood, so that everything passes, everything goes to ruin, and everything is transformed. Creation is carried out in an undulating and fugitive fashion. Much better to occupy ourselves with something else."

He stretched himself on his back and went to sleep, while Pécuchet, with his head down and one knee between his hands, gave himself up to his own reflections.

A border of moss stood on the edge of a hollow path overhung by ash trees, whose slender tops quivered; angelica, mint, and lavender exhaled warm, pungent odours. The atmosphere was drowsy, and Pécuchet, in a kind of stupor, dreamed of the innumerable existences scattered around him—of the insects that buzzed, the springs hidden beneath the grass, the sap of plants, the birds in their nests, the wind, the clouds—of all Nature, without seeking to unveil her mysteries, enchanted by her power, lost in her grandeur.

"I'm thirsty!" said Bouvard, waking up.

"So am I. I should be glad to drink something."

"That's easy," answered a man who was passing by in his shirt-sleeves with a plank on his shoulder. And they recognised that vagabond to whom, on a former occasion, Bouvard had given a glass of wine. He seemed ten years younger, wore his hair foppishly curled, his moustache well waxed, and twisted his figure about in quite a Parisian fashion. After walking about a hundred paces, he opened the gateway of a farmyard, threw down his plank against the wall, and led them into a large kitchen.

"Mélie! are you there, Mélie?"

A young girl appeared. At a word from him she drew some liquor and came back to the table to serve the gentlemen.

Her wheat-coloured head-bands fell over a cap of grey linen. Her worn dress of poor material fell down her entire body without a crease, and, with her straight nose and blue eyes, she had about her something dainty, rustic, and ingenuous.

"She's nice, eh?" said the joiner, while she was bringing them the glasses. "You might take her for a lady dressed up as a peasant-girl, and yet able to do rough work! Poor little heart, come! When I'm rich I'll marry you!"

"You are always talking nonsense, *Monsieur* Gorju," she replied, in a soft voice, with a slightly drawling accent.

A stable boy came in to get some oats out of an old chest, and let the lid fall down so awkwardly that it made splinters of wood fly upwards.

Gorju declaimed against the clumsiness of all "these country fellows," then, on his knees in front of the article of furniture, he tried to put the piece in its place. Pécuchet, while offering to assist him, traced beneath the dust faces of notable characters.

It was a chest of the Renaissance period, with a twisted fringe below, vine branches in the corner, and little columns dividing its front into five portions. In the centre might be seen Venus-Anadyomene standing on a shell, then Hercules and Omphale, Samson and Delilah, Circe and her swine, the daughters of Lot making their father drunk; and all this in a state of complete decay, the chest being worm-eaten, and even its right panel wanting.

Gorju took a candle, in order to give Pécuchet a better view of the left one, which exhibited Adam and Eve under a tree in Paradise in an affectionate attitude.

Bouvard equally admired the chest.

"If you keep it they'll give it to you cheap."

They hesitated, thinking of the necessary repairs.

Gorju might do them, cabinet-making being a branch of his trade.

"Let us go. Come on."

And he dragged Pécuchet towards the fruit-garden, where Madame Castillon, the mistress, was spreading linen.

Mélie, when she had washed her hands, took from where it lay beside the window her lace-frame, sat down in the broad daylight and worked.

The lintel of the door enclosed her like a picture-frame. The bobbins disentangled themselves under her fingers with a sound like the clicking of castanets. Her profile remained bent.

Bouvard asked her questions as to her family, the part of the country she came from, and the wages she got.

She was from Ouistreham, had no relations alive, and earned seventeen shillings a month; in short, she pleased him so much that he wished to take her into his service to assist old Germaine.

Pécuchet reappeared with the mistress of the farm-house, and, while they went on with their bargaining, Bouvard asked Gorju in a very low tone whether the girl would consent to become their servant.

"Lord, yes."

"However," said Bouvard, "I must consult my friend."

The bargain had just been concluded, the price fixed for the chest being thirty-five francs. They were to come to an understanding about the repairs.

They had scarcely got out into the yard when Bouvard spoke of his intentions with regard to Mélie.

Pécuchet stopped (in order the better to reflect), opened his snuff-box, took a pinch, and, wiping the snuff off his nose:

"Indeed, it is a good idea. Good heavens! yes! why not? Besides, you are the master."

Ten minutes afterwards, Gorju showed himself on the top of a ditch, and questioning them: "When do you want me to bring you the chest?"

"To-morrow."

"And about the other question, have you both made up your minds?"

"It's all right," replied Pécuchet.

CHAPTER IV.

Researches in Archæology.

Six months later they had become archæologists, and their house was like a museum.

In the vestibule stood an old wooden beam. The staircase was encumbered with the geological specimens, and an enormous chain was stretched on the ground all along the corridor. They had taken off its hinges the door between the two rooms in which they did not sleep, and had condemned the outer door of the second in order to convert both into a single apartment.

As soon as you crossed the threshold, you came in contact with a stone trough (a Gallo-Roman sarcophagus); the ironwork next attracted your attention. Fixed to the opposite wall, a warming-pan looked down on two andirons and a hearthplate representing a monk caressing a shepherdess. On the boards all around, you saw torches, locks, bolts, and nuts of screws. The floor was rendered invisible beneath fragments of red tiles. A table in the centre exhibited curiosities of the rarest description: the shell of a Cauchoise cap, two argil urns, medals, and a phial of opaline glass. An upholstered armchair had at its back a triangle worked with guipure. A piece of a coat of mail adorned the partition to the right, and on the other side sharp spikes sustained in a horizontal position a unique specimen of a halberd.

The second room, into which two steps led down, contained the old books which they had brought with them from Paris, and those which, on their arrival, they had found in a press. The leaves of the folding-doors had been removed hither. They called it the library.

The back of the door was entirely covered by the genealogical tree of the Croixmare family. In the panelling on the return side, a pastel of a lady in the dress of the period of Louis XV. made a companion picture to the portrait of Père Bouvard. The casing of the glass was decorated with a sombrero of black felt, and a monstrous galoche filled with leaves, the remains of a nest.

Two cocoanuts (which had belonged to Pécuchet since his younger days) flanked on the chimney-piece an earthenware cask on which a peasant sat astride. Close by, in a straw basket, was a little coin brought up by a duck.

In front of the bookcase stood a shell chest of drawers trimmed with plush. The cover of it supported a cat with a mouse in its mouth—a petrifaction from St. Allyre; a work-box, also of shell work, and on this box a decanter of brandy contained a Bon Chrétien pear.

But the finest thing was a statue of St. Peter in the embrasure of the window. His right hand, covered with a glove of apple-green colour, was pressing the key of Paradise. His chasuble, ornamented with fleurs-de-luce, was azure blue, and his tiara very yellow, pointed like a pagoda. He had flabby cheeks, big round eyes, a gaping mouth, and a crooked nose

shaped like a trumpet. Above him hung a canopy made of an old carpet in which you could distinguish two Cupids in a circle of roses, and at his feet, like a pillar, rose a butter-pot bearing these words in white letters on a chocolate ground: "Executed in the presence of H.R.H. the Duke of Angoulême at Noron, rd of October, ."

Pécuchet, from his bed, saw all these things in a row, and sometimes he went as far as Bouvard's room to lengthen the perspective.

One spot remained empty, exactly opposite to the coat of arms, that intended for the Renaissance chest. It was not finished; Gorju was still working at it, jointing the panels in the bakehouse, squaring them or undoing them.

At eleven o'clock he took his breakfast, chatted after that with Mélie, and often did not make his appearance again for the rest of the day.

In order to have pieces of furniture in good style, Bouvard and Pécuchet went scouring the country. What they brought back was not suitable; but they had come across a heap of curious things. Their first passion was a taste for articles of *virtù*; then came the love of the Middle Ages.

To begin with, they visited cathedrals; and the lofty naves mirroring themselves in the holy-water fonts, the glass ornaments dazzling as hangings of precious stones, the tombs in the recesses of the chapels, the uncertain light of crypts—everything, even to the coolness of the walls, thrilled them with a shudder of joy, a religious emotion.

They were soon able to distinguish the epochs, and, disdainful of sacristans, they would say: "Ha! a Romanesque apsis!" "That's of the twelfth century!" "Here we are falling back again into the flamboyant!"

They strove to interpret the sculptured symbols on the capitals, such as the two griffins of Marigny pecking at a tree in blossom; Pécuchet read a satire in the singers with grotesque jaws which terminate the mouldings at Feugerolles; and as for the exuberance of the man that covers one of the mullions at Hérouville, that was a proof, according to Bouvard, of our ancestors' love of broad jokes.

They ended by not tolerating the least symptom of decadence. All was decadence, and they deplored vandalism, and thundered against badigeon.

But the style of a monument does not always agree with its supposed date. The semicircular arch of the thirteenth century still holds sway in Provence. The ogive is, perhaps, very ancient; and authors dispute as to the anteriority of the Romanesque to the Gothic. This want of certainty disappointed them.

After the churches they studied fortresses—those of Domfront and Falaise. They admired under the gate the grooves of the portcullis, and, having reached the top, they first saw all the country around them, then the roofs of the houses in the town, the streets intersecting one another, the carts on the square, the women at the washhouse. The wall descended perpendicularly as far as the palisade; and they grew pale as they thought that men had mounted there, hanging to ladders. They would have ventured into the subterranean passages but that Bouvard found an obstacle in his stomach and Pécuchet in his horror of vipers.

They desired to make the acquaintance of the old manor-houses—Curcy, Bully, Fontenay, Lemarmion, Argonge. Sometimes a Carlovingian tower would show itself at the corner of some farm-buildings behind a heap of manure. The kitchen, garnished with stone benches, made them dream of feudal junketings. Others had a forbiddingly fierce aspect with their three enceintes still visible, their loopholes under the staircase, and their high turrets with pointed sides. Then they came to an apartment in which a window of the Valois period, chased so as to resemble ivory, let in the sun, which heated the grains of colza that strewed the floor. Abbeys were used as barns. The inscriptions on tombstones were effaced. In the midst of fields a gable-end remained standing, clad from top to bottom in ivy which trembled in the wind.

A number of things excited in their breasts a longing to possess them—a tin pot, a paste buckle, printed calicoes with large flowerings. The shortness of money restrained them.

By a happy chance, they unearthed at Balleroy in a tinman's house a Gothic church window, and it was big enough to cover, near the armchair, the right side of the casement up to the second pane. The steeple of Chavignolles displayed itself in the distance, producing a magnificent effect. With the lower part of a cupboard Gorju manufactured a prie-dieu to put under the Gothic window, for he

humoured their hobby. So pronounced was it that they regretted monuments about which nothing at all is known—such as the villa residence of the bishops of Séez.

"Bayeux," says M. de Caumont, "must have possessed a theatre." They searched for the site of it without success.

The village of Montrecy contained a meadow celebrated for the number of medals which chanced formerly to have been found there. They calculated on making a fine harvest in this place. The caretaker refused to admit them.

They were not more fortunate as to the connection which existed between a cistern at Falaise and the faubourg of Caen. Ducks which had been put in there reappeared at Vaucelles, quacking, "Can, can, can"—whence is derived the name of the town!

No step, no sacrifice, was too great for them.

At the inn of Mesnil-Villement, in , M. Galeron got a breakfast for the sum of four sous. They took the same meal there, and ascertained with surprise that things were altered!

Who was the founder of the abbey of St. Anne? Is there any relationship between Marin Onfroy, who, in the twelfth century, imported a new kind of potato, and Onfroy, governor of Hastings at the period of the Conquest? How were they to procure *L'Astucieuse Pythonisse*, a comedy in verse by one Dutrezor, produced at Bayeux, and just now exceedingly rare? Under Louis XIV., Hérambert Dupaty, or Dupastis Hérambert, composed a work which has never appeared, full of anecdotes about Argentan: the question was how to recover these anecdotes. What have become of the autograph memoirs of Madame Dubois de la Pierre, consulted for the unpublished history of L'Aigle by Louis Dasprès, curate of St. Martin? So many problems, so many curious points, to clear up.

But a slight mark often puts one on the track of an invaluable discovery.

Accordingly, they put on their blouses, in order not to put people on their guard, and, in the guise of hawkers, they presented themselves at houses, where they expressed a desire to buy up old papers. They

obtained heaps of them. These included school copybooks, invoices, newspapers that were out of date—nothing of any value.

At last Bouvard and Pécuchet addressed themselves to Larsoneur.

He was absorbed in Celtic studies, and while summarily replying to their questions put others to them.

Had they observed in their rounds any traces of dog-worship, such as are seen at Montargis, or any special circumstances with regard to the fires on St. John's night, marriages, popular sayings, etc.? He even begged of them to collect for him some of those flint axes, then called *celtæ*, which the Druids used in their criminal holocausts.

They procured a dozen of them through Gorju, sent him the smallest of them, and with the others enriched the museum. There they walked with delight, swept the place themselves, and talked about it to all their acquaintances.

One afternoon Madame Bordin and M. Marescot came to see it.

Bouvard welcomed them, and began the demonstration in the porch.

The beam was nothing less than the old gibbet of Falaise, according to the joiner who had sold it, and who had got this information from his grand-father.

The big chain in the corridor came from the subterranean cells of the keep of Torteval. In the notary's opinion it resembled the boundary chains in front of the entrance-courts of manor-houses. Bouvard was convinced that it had been used in former times to bind the captives. He opened the door of the first chamber.

"What are all these tiles for?" exclaimed Madame Bordin.

"To heat the stoves. But let us be a little regular, if you please. This is a tomb discovered in an inn where they made use of it as a horse-trough."

After this, Bouvard took up the two urns filled with a substance which consisted of human dust, and he drew the phials up to his eyes, for the purpose of showing the way the Romans used to shed tears in it.

"But one sees only dismal things at your house!"

Indeed it was a rather grave subject for a lady. So he next drew out of a case several copper coins, together with a silver denarius.

Madame Bordin asked the notary what sum this would be worth at the present day.

The coat of mail which he was examining slipped out of his fingers; some of the links snapped.

Bouvard stifled his annoyance. He had even the politeness to unfasten the halberd, and, bending forward, raising his arms and stamping with his heels, he made a show of hamstringing a horse, stabbing as if with a bayonet and overpowering an enemy.

The widow inwardly voted him a rough person.

She went into raptures over the shell chest of drawers.

The cat of St. Allyre much astonished her, the pear in the decanter not quite so much; then, when she came to the chimney-piece: "Ha! here's a hat that would need mending!"

Three holes, marks of bullets, pierced its brims.

It was the head-piece of a robber chief under the Directory, David de la Bazoque, caught in the act of treason, and immediately put to death.

"So much the better! They did right," said Madame Bordin.

Marescot smiled disdainfully as he gazed at the different objects. He did not understand this galoche having been the sign of a hosier, nor the purport of the earthenware cask—a common cider-keg—and, to be candid, the St. Peter was lamentable with his drunkard's physiognomy.

Madame Bordin made this observation:

"All the same, it must have cost you a good deal?"

"Oh! not too much, not too much."

A slater had given it to him for fifteen francs.

After this, she found fault on the score of propriety with the low dress of the lady in the powdered wig.

"Where is the harm," replied Bouvard, "when one possesses something beautiful?" And he added in a lower tone: "Just as you are yourself, I'm sure."

(The notary turned his back on them, and studied the branches of the Croixmare family.)

She made no response but began to play with her long gold chain. Her bosom swelled out the black taffeta of her corsage, and, with her

eyelashes slightly drawn together, she lowered her chin like a turtle-dove bridling up; then, with an ingenuous air:

"What is this lady's name?"

"It is unknown; she was one of the Regent's mistresses, you know; he who played so many pranks."

"I believe you; the memoirs of the time——"

And the notary, without giving her time to finish the sentence, deplored this example of a prince carried away by his passions.

"But you are all like that!"

The two gentlemen protested, and then followed a dialogue on women and on love. Marescot declared that there were many happy unions; sometimes even, without suspecting it, we have close beside us what we require for our happiness.

The allusion was direct. The widow's cheeks flushed scarlet; but, recovering her composure almost the next moment:

"We are past the age for folly, are we not, M. Bouvard?"

"Ha! ha! For my part, I don't admit that."

And he offered his arm to lead her towards the adjoining room.

"Be careful about the steps. All right? Now observe the church window."

They traced on its surface a scarlet cloak and two angels' wings. All the rest was lost under the leads which held in equilibrium the numerous breakages in the glass. The day was declining; the shadows were lengthening; Madame Bordin had become grave.

Bouvard withdrew, and presently reappeared muffled up in a woollen wrapper, then knelt down at the prie-dieu with his elbows out, his face in his hands, the light of the sun falling on his bald patch; and he was conscious of this effect, for he said:

"Don't I look like a monk of the Middle Ages?"

Then he raised his forehead on one side, with swimming eyes, and trying to give a mystical expression to his face. The solemn voice of Pécuchet was heard in the corridor:

"Don't be afraid. It is I." And he entered, his head covered with a helmet—an iron pot with pointed ear-pieces.

Bouvard did not quit the prie-dieu. The two others remained standing. A minute slipped away in glances of amazement.

Madame Bordin appeared rather cold to Pécuchet. However he wished to know whether everything had been shown to them.

"It seems to me so." And pointing towards the wall: "Ah! pray excuse us; there is an object which we may restore in a moment."

The widow and Marescot thereupon took their leave. The two friends conceived the idea of counterfeiting a competition. They set out on a race after each other; one giving the other the start. Pécuchet won the helmet.

Bouvard congratulated him upon it, and received praises from his friend on the subject of the wrapper.

Mélie arranged it with cords, in the fashion of a gown. They took turns about in receiving visits.

They had visits from Girbal, Foureau, and Captain Heurtaux, and then from inferior persons—Langlois, Beljambe, their husbandmen, and even the servant-girls of their neighbours; and, on each occasion, they went over the same explanations, showed the place where the chest would be, affected a tone of modesty, and claimed indulgence for the obstruction.

Pécuchet on these days wore the Zouave's cap which he had formerly in Paris, considering it more in harmony with an artistic environment. At a particular moment, he would put the helmet on his head, and incline it over the back of his neck, in order to have his face free. Bouvard did not forget the movement with the halberd; finally, with one glance, they would ask each other whether the visitor was worthy of having "the monk of the Middle Ages" represented.

What a thrill they felt when M. de Faverges' carriage drew up before the garden gate! He had only a word to say to them. This was the occasion of his visit:

Hurel, his man of business, had informed him that, while searching everywhere for documents, they had bought up old papers at the farm of Aubrye.

That was perfectly true.

Had they not discovered some letters of Baron de Gonneval, a former aide-de-camp of the Duke of Angoulême, who had stayed at Aubrye? He wished to have this correspondence for family reasons.

They had not got it in the house, but they had in their possession something that would interest him if he would be good enough to follow them into their library.

Never before had such well-polished boots creaked in the corridor. They knocked against the sarcophagus. He even went near smashing several tiles, moved an armchair about, descended two steps; and, when they reached the second chamber, they showed him under the canopy, in front of the St. Peter, the butter-pot made at Noron.

Bouvard and Pécuchet thought that the date might some time be of use. Through politeness, the nobleman inspected their museum. He kept repeating, "Charming! very nice!" all the time giving his mouth little taps with the handle of his switch; and said that, for his part, he thanked them for having rescued those remains of the Middle Ages, an epoch of religious faith and chivalrous devotion. He loved progress, and would have given himself up like them to these interesting studies, but that politics, the General Council, agriculture, a veritable whirlwind, drove him away from them.

"After you, however, one would have merely gleanings, for soon you will have captured all the curiosities of the department."

"Without vanity, we think so," said Pécuchet.

However, one might still discover some at Chavignolles; for example, there was, close to the cemetery wall in the lane, a holy-water basin buried under the grass from time immemorial.

They were pleased with the information, then exchanged a significant glance—"Is it worth the trouble?"—but already the Count was opening the door.

Mélie, who was behind it, fled abruptly.

As he passed out of the house into the grounds, he observed Gorju smoking his pipe with folded arms.

"You employ this fellow? I would not put much confidence in him in a time of disturbance."

And M. de Faverges sprang lightly into his tilbury.

Why did their servant-maid seem to be afraid of him?

They questioned her, and she told them she had been employed on his farm. She was that little girl who poured out drink for the harvesters when they came there two years before. They had taken her on as a help at the château, and dismissed her in consequence of false reports.

As for Gorju, how could they find fault with him? He was very handy, and showed the utmost consideration for them.

Next day, at dawn, they repaired to the cemetery. Bouvard felt with his walking-stick at the spot indicated. They heard the sound of a hard substance. They pulled up some nettles, and discovered a stone basin, a baptismal font, out of which plants were sprouting. It is not usual, however, to bury baptismal fonts outside churches.

Pécuchet made a sketch of it; Bouvard wrote out a description of it; and they sent both to Larsoneur. His reply came immediately.

"Victory, my dear associates! Unquestionably, it is a druidical bowl!"

However, let them be careful about the matter. The axe was doubtful; and as much for his sake as for their own, he pointed out a series of works to be consulted.

In a postscript, Larsoneur confessed his longing to have a look at this bowl, which opportunity would be afforded him in a few days, when he would be starting on a trip from Brittany.

Then Bouvard and Pécuchet plunged into Celtic archæology.

According to this science, the ancient Gauls, our ancestors, adored Kirk and Kron, Taranis Esus, Nelalemnia, Heaven and Earth, the Wind, the Waters, and, above all, the great Teutates, who is the Saturn of the Pagans; for Saturn, when he reigned in Phœnicia, wedded a nymph named Anobret, by whom he had a child called Jeüd. And Anobret presents the same traits as Sara; Jeüd was sacrificed (or near being so), like Isaac; therefore, Saturn is Abraham; whence the conclusion must be drawn that the religion of the Gauls had the same principles as that of the Jews.

Their society was very well organised. The first class of persons amongst them included the people, the nobility, and the king; the second, the jurisconsults; and in the third, the highest, were ranged, according to Taillepied, "the various kinds of philosophers," that is to

say, the Druids or Saronides, themselves divided into Eubages, Bards, and Vates.

One section of them prophesied, another sang, while a third gave instruction in botany, medicine, history, and literature, in short, all the arts of their time.

Pythagoras and Plato were their pupils. They taught metaphysics to the Greeks, sorcery to the Persians, aruspicy to the Etruscans, and to the Romans the plating of copper and the traffic in hams.

But of this people, who ruled the ancient world, there remain only stones either isolated or in groups of three, or placed together so as to resemble a rude chamber, or forming enclosures.

Bouvard and Pécuchet, filled with enthusiasm, studied in succession the stone on the Post-farm at Ussy, the Coupled Stone at Quest, the Standing Stone near L'Aigle, and others besides.

All these blocks, of equal insignificance, speedily bored them; and one day, when they had just seen the menhir at Passais, they were about to return from it when their guide led them into a beech wood, which was blocked up with masses of granite, like pedestals or monstrous tortoises. The most remarkable of them is hollowed like a basin. One of its sides rises, and at the further end two channels run down to the ground; this must have been for the flowing of blood—impossible to doubt it! Chance does not make these things.

The roots of the trees were intertwined with these rugged pedestals. In the distance rose columns of fog like huge phantoms. It was easy to imagine under the leaves the priests in golden tiaras and white robes, and their human victims with arms bound behind their backs, and at the side of the bowl the Druidess watching the red stream, whilst around her the multitude yelled, to the accompaniment of cymbals and of trumpets made from the horns of the wild bull.

Immediately they decided on their plan. And one night, by the light of the moon, they took the road to the cemetery, stealing in like thieves, in the shadows of the houses. The shutters were fastened, and quiet reigned around every dwelling-place; not a dog barked.

Gorju accompanied them. They set to work. All that could be heard was the noise of stones knocking against the spade as it dug through the soil.

The vicinity of the dead was disagreeable to them. The church clock struck with a rattling sound, and the rosework on its tympanum looked like an eye espying a sacrilege. At last they carried off the bowl.

They came next morning to the cemetery to see the traces of the operation.

The abbé, who was taking the air at his door, begged of them to do him the honour of a visit, and, having introduced them into his breakfast-parlour, he gazed at them in a singular fashion.

In the middle of the sideboard, between the plates, was a soup-tureen decorated with yellow bouquets.

Pécuchet praised it, at a loss for something to say.

"It is old Rouen," returned the curé; "an heirloom. Amateurs set a high value on it—M. Marescot especially." As for him, thank God, he had no love of curiosities; and, as they appeared not to understand, he declared that he had seen them himself stealing the baptismal font.

The two archæologists were quite abashed. The article in question was not in actual use.

No matter! they should give it back.

No doubt! But, at least, let them be permitted to get a painter to make a drawing of it.

"Be it so, gentlemen."

"Between ourselves, is it not?" said Bouvard, "under the seal of confession."

The ecclesiastic, smiling, reassured them with a gesture.

It was not he whom they feared, but rather Larsoneur. When he would be passing through Chavignolles, he would feel a hankering after the bowl; and his chatterings might reach the ears of the Government. Out of prudence they kept it hidden in the bakehouse, then in the arbour, in the trunk, in a cupboard. Gorju was tired of dragging it about.

The possession of such a rare piece of furniture bound them the closer to the Celticism of Normandy.

Its sources were Egyptian. Séez, in the department of the Orne, is sometimes written Saïs, like the city of the Delta. The Gauls swore by the bull, an idea derived from the bull Apis. The Latin name of Bellocastes, which was that of the people of Bayeux, comes from Beli Casa, dwelling, sanctuary of Belus—Belus and Osiris, the same divinity!

"There is nothing," says Mangou de la Londe, "opposed to the idea that druidical monuments existed near Bayeux." "This country," adds M. Roussel, "is like the country in which the Egyptians built the temple of Jupiter Ammon."

So then there was a temple in which riches were shut up. All the Celtic monuments contain them.

"In ," relates Dom Martin, "one Sieur Heribel exhumed in the vicinity of Bayeux, several argil vases full of bones, and concluded (in accordance with tradition and authorities which had disappeared) that this place, a necropolis, was the Mount Faunus in which the Golden Calf is buried."

In the first place, where is Mount Faunus? The authors do not point it out. The natives know nothing about it. It would be necessary to devote themselves to excavations, and with that view they forwarded a petition to the prefect, to which they got no response.

Perhaps Mount Faunus had disappeared, and was not a hill but a barrow?

Several of them contain skeletons that have the position of the fœtus in the mother's womb. This meant that for them the tomb was, as it were, a second gestation, preparing them for another life. Therefore the barrow symbolises the female organ, just as the raised stone is the male organ.

In fact, where menhirs are found, an obscene creed has persisted. Witness what took place at Guerande, at Chichebouche, at Croissic, at Livarot. In former times the towers, the pyramids, the wax tapers, the boundaries of roads, and even the trees had a phallic meaning. Bouvard and Pécuchet collected whipple-trees of carriages, legs of armchairs, bolts of cellars, apothecaries' pestles. When people came to see them they would ask, "What do you think that is like?" and then they would confide the secret. And, if anyone uttered an exclamation, they would shrug their shoulders in pity.

One evening as they were dreaming about the dogmas of the Druids, the abbé cautiously stole in.

Immediately they showed the museum, beginning with the church window; but they longed to reach the new compartment—that of the phallus. The ecclesiastic stopped them, considering the exhibition indecent. He came to demand back his baptismal font.

Bouvard and Pécuchet begged for another fortnight, the time necessary for taking a moulding of it.

"The sooner the better," said the abbé.

Then he chatted on general topics.

Pécuchet, who had left the room a minute, on coming back slipped a napoleon into his hand.

The priest made a backward movement.

"Oh! for your poor!"

And, colouring, M. Jeufroy crammed the gold piece into his cassock.

To give back the bowl, the bowl for sacrifices! Never, while they lived! They were even anxious to learn Hebrew, which is the mother-tongue of Celtic, unless indeed the former language be derived from it! And they had planned a journey into Brittany, commencing with Rennes, where they had an appointment with Larsoneur, with a view of studying that urn mentioned in the Memorials of the Celtic Academy, which appeared to have contained the ashes of Queen Artimesia, when the mayor entered unceremoniously with his hat on, like the boorish individual he was.

"All this won't do, my fine fellows! You must give it up!"

"What, pray?"

"Rogues! I know well you are concealing it!"

Someone had betrayed them.

They replied that they had the curé's permission to keep it.

"We'll soon see that!"

Foureau went away. An hour later he came back.

They were obstinate.

In the first place, this holy-water basin was not wanted, as it really was not a holy-water basin at all. They would prove this by a vast

number of scientific reasons. Next, they offered to acknowledge in their will that it belonged to the parish. They even proposed to buy it.

"And, besides, it is my property," Pécuchet asseverated.

The twenty francs accepted by M. Jeufroy furnished a proof of the contract, and if he compelled them to go before a justice of the peace, so much the worse: he would be taking a false oath!

During these disputes he had again seen the soup-tureen many times, and in his soul had sprung up the desire, the thirst for possession of this piece of earthenware. If the curé was willing to give it to him, he would restore the bowl, otherwise not.

Through weariness or fear of scandal, M. Jeufroy yielded it up. It was placed amongst their collection near the Cauchoise cap. The bowl decorated the church porch; and they consoled themselves for the loss of it with the reflection that the people of Chavignolles were ignorant of its value.

But the soup-tureen inspired them with a taste for earthenware—a new subject for study and for explorations through the country.

It was the period when persons of good position were looking out for old Rouen dishes. The notary possessed a few of them, and derived from the fact, as it were, an artistic reputation which was prejudicial to his profession, but for which he made up by the serious side of his character.

When he learned that Bouvard and Pécuchet had got the soup-tureen, he came to propose to them an exchange.

Pécuchet would not consent to this.

"Let us say no more about it!" and Marescot proceeded to examine their ceramic collection.

All the specimens hung up along the wall were blue on a background of dirty white, and some showed their horn of plenty in green or reddish tones. There were shaving-dishes, plates and saucers, objects long sought for, and brought back in the recesses of one's frock-coat close to one's heart.

Marescot praised them, and then talked about other kinds of faïence, the Hispano-Arabian, the Dutch, the English, and the Italian, and having dazzled them with his erudition:

"Might I see your soup-tureen again?"

He made it ring by rapping on it with his fingers, then he contemplated the two S's painted on the lid.

"The mark of Rouen!" said Pécuchet.

"Ho! ho! Rouen, properly speaking, would not have any mark. When Moutiers was unknown, all the French faïence came from Nevers. So with Rouen to-day. Besides, they imitate it to perfection at El-bœuf."

"It isn't possible!"

"Majolica is cleverly imitated. Your specimen is of no value; and as for me, I was about to do a downright foolish thing."

When the notary had gone, Pécuchet sank into an armchair in a state of nervous prostration.

"We shouldn't have given back the bowl," said Bouvard; "but you get excited, and always lose your head."

"Yes, I do lose my head"; and Pécuchet, snatching up the soup-tureen, flung it some distance away from him against the sarcophagus.

Bouvard, more self-possessed, picked up the broken pieces one by one; and some time afterwards this idea occurred to him: "Marescot, through jealousy, might have been making fools of us!"

"How?"

"There's nothing to show me that the soup-tureen was not genuine! Whereas the other specimens which he pretended to admire are perhaps counterfeit."

And so the day closed with uncertainties and regrets.

This was no reason for abandoning their tour into Brittany.

They even purposed to take Gorju along with them to assist them in their excavations.

For some time past, he had slept at the house, in order to finish the more quickly the repairing of the chest.

The prospect of a change of place annoyed him, and when they talked about menhirs and barrows which they calculated on seeing: "I know better ones," said he to them; "in Algeria, in the South, near the sources of Bou-Mursoug, you meet quantities of them." He then gave a description of a tomb which chanced to be open right in front of him, and which contained a skeleton squatting like an ape with its two arms around its legs.

Larsoneur, when they informed him of the circumstance, would not believe a word of it.

Bouvard sifted the matter, and started the question again.

How does it happen that the monuments of the Gauls are shapeless, whereas these same Gauls were civilised in the time of Julius Cæsar? No doubt they were traceable to a more ancient people.

Such a hypothesis, in Larsoneur's opinion, betrayed a lack of patriotism.

No matter; there is nothing to show that these monuments are the work of Gauls. "Show us a text!"

The Academician was displeased, and made no reply; and they were very glad of it, so much had the Druids bored them.

If they did not know what conclusion to arrive at as to earthenware and as to Celticism, it was because they were ignorant of history, especially the history of France.

The work of Anquetil was in their library; but the series of "do-nothing kings" amused them very little. The villainy of the mayors of the Palace did not excite their indignation, and they gave Anquetil up, repelled by the ineptitude of his reflections.

Then they asked Dumouchel, "What is the best history of France?"

Dumouchel subscribed, in their names, to a circulating library, and forwarded to them the work of Augustin Thierry, together with two volumes of M. de Genoude.

According to Genoude, royalty, religion, and the national assemblies—here are "the principles" of the French nation, which go back to the Merovingians. The Carlovingians fell away from them. The Capetians, being in accord with the people, made an effort to maintain them. Absolute power was established under Louis XIII., in order to conquer Protestantism, the final effort of feudalism; and ' is a return to the constitution of our ancestors.

Pécuchet admired his ideas. They excited Bouvard's pity, as he had read Augustin Thierry first: "What trash you talk with your French nation, seeing that France did not exist! nor the national assemblies! and the Carlovingians usurped nothing at all! and the kings did not set free the communes! Read for yourself."

Pécuchet gave way before the evidence, and surpassed him in scientific strictness. He would have considered himself dishonoured if he had said "Charlemagne" and not "Karl the Great," "Clovis" in place of "Clodowig."

Nevertheless he was beguiled by Genoude, deeming it a clever thing to join together both ends of French history, so that the middle period becomes rubbish; and, in order to ease their minds about it, they took up the collection of Buchez and Roux.

But the fustian of the preface, that medley of Socialism and Catholicism, disgusted them; and the excessive accumulation of details prevented them from grasping the whole.

They had recourse to M. Thiers.

It was during the summer of , in the garden beneath the arbour. Pécuchet, his feet resting on a small chair, read aloud in his cavernous voice, without feeling tired, stopping to plunge his fingers into his snuff-box. Bouvard listened, his pipe in his mouth, his legs wide apart, and the upper part of his trousers unbuttoned.

Old men had spoken to them of ', and recollections that were almost personal gave life to the prosy descriptions of the author. At that time the high-roads were covered with soldiers singing the "Marseillaise." At the thresholds of doors women sat sewing canvas to make tents. Sometimes came a wave of men in red caps, bending forward a pike, at the end of which could be seen a discoloured head with the hair hanging down. The lofty tribune of the Convention looked down upon a cloud of dust, amid which wild faces were yelling cries "Death!" Anyone who passed, at midday, close to the basin of the Tuileries could hear each blow of the guillotine, as if they were cutting up sheep.

And the breeze moved the vine-leaves of the arbour; the ripe barley swayed at intervals; a blackbird was singing. And, casting glances around them, they relished this tranquil scene.

What a pity that from the beginning they had failed to understand one another! For if the royalists had reflected like the patriots, if the court had exhibited more candour, and its adversaries less violence, many of the calamities would not have happened.

By force of chattering in this way they roused themselves into a state of excitement. Bouvard, being liberal-minded and of a sensitive nature, was a Constitutionalist, a Girondist, a Thermidorian; Pécuchet, being of a bilious temperament and a lover of authority, declared himself a *sans-culotte*, and even a Robespierrist. He expressed approval of the condemnation of the King, the most violent decrees, the worship of the Supreme Being. Bouvard preferred that of Nature. He would have saluted with pleasure the image of a big woman pouring out from her breasts to her adorers not water but Chambertin.

In order to have more facts for the support of their arguments they procured other works: Montgaillard, Prudhomme, Gallois, Lacretelle, etc.; and the contradictions of these books in no way embarrassed them. Each took from them what might vindicate the cause that he espoused.

Thus Bouvard had no doubt that Danton accepted a hundred thousand crowns to bring forward motions that would destroy the Republic; while in Pécuchet's opinion Vergniaud would have asked for six thousand francs a month.

"Never! Explain to me, rather, why Robespierre's sister had a pension from Louis XVIII."

"Not at all! It was from Bonaparte. And, since you take it that way, who is the person that a few months before Égalité's death had a secret conference with him? I wish they would reinsert in the *Memoirs of La Campan* the suppressed paragraphs. The death of the Dauphin appears to me equivocal. The powder magazine at Grenelle by exploding killed two thousand persons. The cause was unknown, they tell us: what nonsense!" For Pécuchet was not far from understanding it, and threw the blame for every crime on the manœuvres of the aristocrats, gold, and the foreigner.

In the mind of Bouvard there could be no dispute as to the use of the words, "Ascend to heaven, son of St. Louis," as to the incident about the virgins of Verdun, or as to the *culottes* clothed in human skin. He accepted Prudhomme's lists, a million of victims, exactly.

But the Loire, red with gore from Saumur to Nantes, in a line of eighteen leagues, made him wonder. Pécuchet in the same degree entertained doubts, and they began to distrust the historians.

For some the Revolution is a Satanic event; others declare it to be a sublime exception. The vanquished on each side naturally play the part of martyrs.

Thierry demonstrates, with reference to the Barbarians, that it is foolish to institute an inquiry as to whether such a prince was good or was bad. Why not follow this method in the examination of more recent epochs? But history must needs avenge morality: we feel grateful to Tacitus for having lacerated Tiberius. After all, whether the Queen had lovers; whether Dumouriez, since Valmy, intended to betray her; whether in Prairial it was the Mountain or the Girondist party that began, and in Thermidor the Jacobins or the Plain; what matters it to the development of the Revolution, of which the causes were far to seek and the results incalculable?

Therefore it was bound to accomplish itself, to be what it was; but, suppose the flight of the King without impediment, Robespierre escaping or Bonaparte assassinated—chances which depended upon an innkeeper proving less scrupulous, a door being left open, or a sentinel falling asleep—and the progress of the world would have taken a different direction.

They had no longer on the men and the events of that period a single well-balanced idea. In order to form an impartial judgment upon it, it would have been necessary to have read all the histories, all the memoirs, all the newspapers, and all the manuscript productions, for through the least omission might arise an error, which might lead to others without limit.

They abandoned the subject. But the taste for history had come to them, the need of truth for its own sake.

Perhaps it is easier to find it in more ancient epochs? The authors, being far removed from the events, ought to speak of them without passion. And they began the good Rollin.

"What a heap of rubbish!" exclaimed Bouvard, after the first chapter.

"Wait a bit," said Pécuchet, rummaging at the end of their library, where lay heaped up the books of the last proprietor, an old lawyer, an accomplished man with a mania for literature; and, having put out of their places a number of novels and plays, together with an edition of

Montesquieu and translations of Horace, he obtained what he was looking for—Beaufort's work on Roman History.

Titus Livius attributes the foundation of Rome to Romulus; Sallust gives the credit of it to the Trojans under Æneas. Coriolanus died in exile, according to Fabius Pictor; through the stratagems of Attius Tullius, if we may believe Dionysius. Seneca states that Horatius Cocles came back victorious; and Dionysius that he was wounded in the leg. And La Mothe le Vayer gives expression to similar doubts with reference to other nations.

There is no agreement as to the antiquity of the Chaldeans, the age of Homer, the existence of Zoroaster, the two empires of Assyria. Quintus Curtius has manufactured fables. Plutarch gives the lie to Herodotus. We should have a different idea of Cæsar if Vercingetorix had written his Commentaries.

Ancient history is obscure through want of documents. There is an abundance of them in modern history; and Bouvard and Pécuchet came back to France, and began Sismondi.

The succession of so many men filled them with a desire to understand them more thoroughly, to enter into their lives. They wanted to read the originals—Gregory of Tours, Monstrelet, Commines, all those whose names were odd or agreeable. But the events got confused through want of knowledge of the dates.

Fortunately they possessed Dumouchel's work on mnemonics, a duodecimo in boards with this epigraph: "To instruct while amusing."

It combined the three systems of Allevy, of Pâris, and of Fenaigle.

Allevy transforms numbers into external objects, the number being expressed by a tower, by a bird, by a camel, and so on. Pâris strikes the imagination by means of rebuses: an armchair garnished with clincher-nails will give "Clou, vis—Clovis"; and, as the sound of frying makes "ric, ric," whitings in a stove will recall "Chilperic." Fenaigle divides the universe into houses, which contain rooms, each having four walls with nine panels, and each panel bearing an emblem. A pharos on a mountain will tell the name of "Phar-a-mond" in Pâris's system; and, according to Allevy's directions, by placing above a mirror, which signifies , a bird , and a hoop , we shall obtain , the date of that prince's accession.

For greater clearness, they took as their mnemotechnic basis their own house, their domicile, associating a distinct fact with each part of it; and the courtyard, the garden, the outskirts, the entire country, had for them no meaning any longer except as objects for facilitating memory. The boundaries in the fields defined certain epochs; the apple trees were genealogical stems, the bushes battles; everything became symbolic. They sought for quantities of absent things on their walls, ended by seeing them, but lost the recollection of what dates they represented.

Besides the dates are not always authentic. They learned out of a manual for colleges that the birth of Jesus ought to be carried back five years earlier than the date usually assigned for it; that there were amongst the Greeks three ways of counting the Olympiads, and eight amongst the Latin of making the year begin. So many opportunities for mistakes outside of those which result from the zodiacs, from the epochs, and from the different calendars!

And from carelessness as to dates they passed to contempt for facts.

What is important is the philosophy of history!

Bouvard could not finish the celebrated discourse of Bossuet.

"The eagle of Meaux is a farce-actor! He forgets China, the Indies, and America; but is careful to let us know that Theodosius was 'the joy of the universe,' that Abraham 'treated kings as his equals,' and that the philosophy of the Greeks has come down from the Hebrews. His preoccupation with the Hebrews provokes me."

Pécuchet shared this opinion, and wished to make him read Vico.

"Why admit," objected Bouvard, "that fables are more true than the truths of historians?"

Pécuchet tried to explain myths, and got lost in the *Scienza Nuova*.

"Will you deny the design of Providence?"

"I don't know it!" said Bouvard. And they decided to refer to Dumouchel.

The professor confessed that he was now at sea on the subject of history.

"It is changing every day. There is a controversy as to the kings of Rome and the journeys of Pythagoras. Doubts have been thrown on Belisarius, William Tell, and even on the Cid, who has become, thanks

to the latest discoveries, a common robber. It is desirable that no more discoveries should be made, and the Institute ought even to lay down a kind of canon prescribing what it is necessary to believe!"

In a postscript he sent them some rules of criticism taken from Daunou's course of lectures:

"To cite by way of proof the testimony of multitudes is a bad method of proof; they are not there to reply.

"To reject impossible things. Pausanias was shown the stone swallowed by Saturn.

"Architecture may lie: instance, the arch of the Forum, in which Titus is called the first conqueror of Jerusalem, which had been conquered before him by Pompey.

"Medals sometimes deceive. Under Charles IX. money was minted from the coinage of Henry II.

"Take into account the skill of forgers and the interestedness of apologists and calumniators."

Few historians have worked in accordance with these rules, but all in view of one special cause, of one religion, of one nation, of one party, of one system, in order to curb kings, to advise the people, or to offer moral examples.

The others, who pretend merely to narrate, are no better; for everything cannot be told—some selection must be made. But in the selection of documents some special predilection will have the upper hand, and, as this varies according to the conditions under which the writer views the matter, history will never be fixed.

"It is sad," was their reflection. However, one might take a subject, exhaust the sources of information concerning it, make a good analysis of them, then condense it into a narrative, which would be, as it were, an epitome of the facts reflecting the entire truth.

"Do you wish that we should attempt to compose a history?"

"I ask for nothing better. But of what?"

"Suppose we write the life of the Duke of Angoulême?"

"But he was an idiot!" returned Bouvard.

"What matter? Personages of an inferior mould have sometimes an enormous influence, and he may have controlled the machinery of public affairs."

The books would furnish them with information; and M. de Faverges, no doubt, would have them himself, or could procure them from some elderly gentleman of his acquaintance.

They thought over this project, discussed it, and finally determined to spend a fortnight at the municipal library at Caen in making researches there.

The librarian placed at their disposal some general histories and some pamphlets with a coloured lithograph portrait representing at three-quarters' length Monseigneur the Duke of Angoulême.

The blue cloth of his uniform disappeared under the epaulets, the stars, and the large red ribbon of the Legion of Honour; a very high collar surrounded his long neck; his pear-shaped head was framed by the curls of his hair and by his scanty whiskers and heavy eyelashes; and a very big nose and thick lips gave his face an expression of commonplace good-nature.

When they had taken notes, they drew up a programme:

"Birth and childhood but slightly interesting. One of his tutors is the Abbé Guénée, Voltaire's enemy. At Turin he is made to cast a cannon; and he studies the campaigns of Charles VIII. Also he is nominated, despite his youth, colonel of a regiment of noble guards.

".—His marriage.

".—The English take possession of Bordeaux. He runs up behind them and shows his person to the inhabitants. Description of the prince's person.

".—Bonaparte surprises him. Immediately he appeals to the King of Spain; and Toulon, were it not for Masséna, would have been surrendered to England.

"Operations in the South. He is beaten, but released under the promise to restore the crown diamonds carried off at full gallop by the King, his uncle.

"After the Hundred Days he returns with his parents and lives in peace. Several years glide away.

"War with Spain. Once he has crossed the Pyrenees, victories everywhere follow the grandson of Henry IV. He takes the Trocadéro, reaches the pillars of Hercules, crushes the factions, embraces Ferdinand, and returns.

"Triumphal arches; flowers presented by young girls; dinners at the Prefecture; 'Te Deum' in the cathedrals. The Parisians are at the height of intoxication. The city offers him a banquet. Songs containing allusions to the hero are sung at the theatre.

"The enthusiasm diminishes; for in a ball organised by subscription proves a failure.

"As he is High Admiral of France, he inspects the fleet, which is going to start for Algiers.

"July .—Marmont informs him of the state of affairs. Then he gets into such a rage that he wounds himself in the hand with the general's sword. The King entrusts him with the command of all the forces.

"He meets detachments of the line in the Bois de Boulogne, and has not a word to say to them.

"From St. Cloud he flies to the bridge of Sèvres. Coldness of the troops. That does not shake him. The Royal family leave Trianon. He sits down at the foot of an oak, unrolls a map, meditates, remounts his horse, passes in front of St. Cyr, and sends to the students words of hope.

"At Rambouillet the bodyguards bid him good-bye. He embarks, and during the entire passage is ill. End of his career.

"The importance possessed by the bridges ought here to be noticed. First, he exposes himself needlessly on the bridge of the Inn; he carries the bridge St. Esprit and the bridge of Lauriol; at Lyons the two bridges are fatal to him, and his fortune dies before the bridge of Sèvres.

"List of his virtues. Needless to praise his courage, to which he joined a far-seeing policy. For he offered every soldier sixty francs to desert the Emperor, and in Spain he tried to corrupt the Constitutionalists with ready money.

"His reserve was so profound that he consented to the marriage arranged between his father and the Queen of Etruria, to the formation of

a new cabinet after the Ordinances, to the abdication in favour of Chambord—to everything that they asked him.

"Firmness, however, was not wanting in him. At Angers, he cashiered the infantry of the National Guard, who, jealous of the cavalry, had succeeded by means of a stratagem in forming his escort, so that his Highness found himself jammed into the ranks at the cost of having his knees squeezed. But he censured the cavalry, the cause of the disorder, and pardoned the infantry—a veritable judgment of Solomon.

"His piety manifested itself by numerous devotions, and his clemency by obtaining the pardon of General Debelle, who had borne arms against him.

"Intimate details; characteristics of the Prince:

"At the château of Beauregard, in his childhood, he took pleasure in deepening, along with his brother, a sheet of water, which may still be seen. On one occasion, he visited the barracks of the chasseurs, called for a glass of wine, and drank the King's health.

"While walking, in order to mark the step, he used to keep repeating to himself: 'One, two—one, two—one, two!'

"Some of his sayings have been preserved:—

"To a deputation from Bordeaux:

"'What consoles me for not being at Bordeaux is to find myself amidst you.'

"To the Protestants of Nismes:

"'I am a good Catholic, but I shall never forget that my distinguished ancestor was a Protestant.'

"To the pupils of St. Cyr, when all was lost:

"'Right, my friends! The news is good! This is right—all right!'

"After Charles X.'s abdication:

"'Since they don't want me, let them settle it themselves.'

"And in , at every turn, in the smallest village:

"'No more war; no more conscription; no more united rights.'

"His style was as good as his utterance. His proclamations surpassed everything.

"The first, of the Count of Artois, began thus:

"'Frenchmen, your King's brother has arrived!'

"That of the prince:

"'I come. I am the son of your kings. You are Frenchmen!'

"Order of the day, dated from Bayonne:

"'Soldiers, I come!'

"Another, in the midst of disaffection:

"'Continue to sustain with the vigour which befits the French soldier the struggle which you have begun. France expects it of you.'

"Lastly, at Rambouillet:

"'The King has entered into an arrangement with the government established at Paris, and everything brings us to believe that this arrangement is on the point of being concluded.'

"'Everything brings us to believe' was sublime."

"One thing vexed me," said Bouvard, "that there is no mention of his love affairs!" And they made a marginal note: "To search for the prince's amours."

At the moment when they were taking their leave, the librarian, bethinking himself of it, showed them another portrait of the Duke of Angoulême.

In this one he appeared as a colonel of cuirassiers, on a vaulting-horse, his eyes still smaller, his mouth open, and his hair straight.

How were they to reconcile the two portraits? Had he straight hair, or rather crisped—unless he carried affectation so far as to get it curled?

A grave question, from Pécuchet's point of view, for the mode of wearing the hair indicates the temperament, and the temperament the individual.

Bouvard considered that we know nothing of a man as long as we are ignorant of his passions; and in order to clear up these two points, they presented themselves at the château of Faverges. The count was not there; this retarded their work. They returned home annoyed.

The door of the house was wide open; there was nobody in the kitchen. They went upstairs, and who should they see in the middle of Bouvard's room but Madame Bordin, looking about her right and left!

"Excuse me," she said, with a forced laugh, "I have for the last hour been searching for your cook, whom I wanted for my preserves."

They found her in the wood-house on a chair fast asleep. They shook her. She opened her eyes.

"What is it now? You are always prodding at me with your questions!"

It was clear that Madame Bordin had been putting some to her in their absence.

Germaine got out of her torpor, and complained of indigestion.

"I am remaining to take care of you," said the widow.

Then they perceived in the courtyard a big cap, the lappets of which were fluttering. It was Madame Castillon, proprietress of a neighbouring farm. She was calling out: "Gorju! Gorju!"

And from the corn-loft the voice of their little servant-maid answered loudly:

"He is not there!"

At the end of five minutes she came down, with her cheeks flushed and looking excited. Bouvard and Pécuchet reprimanded her for having been so slow. She unfastened their gaiters without a murmur.

Then they went to look at the chest. The bakehouse was covered with its scattered fragments; the carvings were damaged, the leaves broken.

At this sight, in the face of this fresh disaster, Bouvard had to keep back his tears, and Pécuchet got a fit of nervous shivering.

Gorju, making his appearance almost immediately, explained the matter. He had just put the chest outside in order to varnish it, when a wandering cow knocked it down on the ground.

"Whose cow?" said Pécuchet.

"I don't know."

"Ah! you left the door open, as you did some time ago. It is your fault."

At any rate, they would have nothing more to do with him. He had been trifling with them too long, and they wanted no more of him or his work.

"These gentlemen were wrong. The damage was not so great. It would be all settled before three weeks." And Gorju accompanied them into the kitchen, where Germaine was seen dragging herself along to see after the dinner.

They noticed on the table a bottle of Calvados, three quarters emptied.

"By you, no doubt," said Pécuchet to Gorju.

"By me! never!"

Bouvard met his protest by observing:

"You are the only man in the house."

"Well, and what about the women?" rejoined the workman, with a side wink.

Germaine caught him up:

"You'd better say 'twas I!"

"Certainly it was you."

"And perhaps 'twas I smashed the press?"

Gorju danced about.

"Don't you see that she's drunk?"

Then they squabbled violently with each other, he with a pale face and a biting manner, she purple with rage, tearing tufts of grey hair from under her cotton cap. Madame Bordin took Germaine's part, while Mélie took Gorju's.

The old woman burst out:

"Isn't it an abomination that you two should be spending days together in the grove, not to speak of the nights?—a sort of Parisian, eating up honest women, who comes to our master's house to play tricks on them!"

Bouvard opened his eyes wide.

"What tricks?"

"I tell you he's making fools of you!"

"Nobody can make a fool of me!" exclaimed Pécuchet, and, indignant at her insolence, exasperated by the mortification inflicted on him, he dismissed her, telling her to go and pack. Bouvard did not oppose this decision, and they went out, leaving Germaine in sobs over her misfortune, while Madame Bordin was trying to console her.

In the course of the evening, as they grew calmer, they went over these occurrences, asked themselves who had drunk the Calvados, how the chest got broken, what Madame Castillon wanted when she was calling Gorju, and whether he had dishonoured Mélie.

"We are not able to tell," said Bouvard, "what is happening in our own household, and we lay claim to discover all about the hair and the love affairs of the Duke of Angoulême."

Pécuchet added: "How many questions there are in other respects important and still more difficult!"

Whence they concluded that external facts are not everything. It is necessary to complete them by means of psychology. Without imagination, history is defective.

"Let us send for some historical romances!"

CHAPTER V.

Romance and the Drama.

They first read Walter Scott.

It was like the surprise of a new world.

The men of the past who had for them been only phantoms or names, became living beings, kings, princes, wizards, footmen, gamekeepers, monks, gipsies, merchants, and soldiers, who deliberate, fight, travel, trade, eat and drink, sing and pray, in the armouries of castles, on the blackened benches of inns, in the winding streets of cities, under the sloping roofs of booths, in the cloisters of monasteries. Landscapes artistically arranged formed backgrounds for the narratives, like the scenery of a theatre. You follow with your eyes a horseman galloping along the strand; you breathe amid the heather the freshness of the wind; the moon shines on the lake, over which a boat is skimming; the sun glitters on the breast-plates; the rain falls over leafy huts. Without having any knowledge of the models, they thought these pictures lifelike and the illusion was complete.

And so the winter was spent.

When they had breakfasted, they would instal themselves in the little room, one at each side of the chimney-piece, and, facing each other, book in hand, they would begin to read in silence. When the day wore

apace, they would go out for a walk along the road, then, having snatched a hurried dinner, they would resume their reading far into the night. In order to protect himself from the lamp, Bouvard wore blue spectacles, while Pécuchet kept the peak of his cap drawn over his forehead.

Germaine had not gone, and Gorju now and again came to dig in the garden; for they had yielded through indifference, forgetful of material things.

After Walter Scott, Alexandre Dumas diverted them after the fashion of a magic-lantern. His personages, active as apes, strong as bulls, gay as chaffinches, enter on the scene and talk abruptly, jump off roofs to the pavement, receive frightful wounds from which they recover, are believed to be dead, and yet reappear. There are trap-doors under the boards, antidotes, disguises; and all things get entangled, hurry along, and are finally unravelled without a minute for reflection. Love observes the proprieties, fanaticism is cheerful, and massacres excite a smile.

Rendered hard to please by these two masters, they could not tolerate the balderdash of the *Belisaraire*, the foolery of the *Numa Pompilius*, of Marchangy, and Vicomte d'Arlincourt. The colouring of Frédéric Soulié (like that of the book-lover Jacob) appeared to them insufficient; and M. Villemain scandalised them by showing at page of his *Lascaris*, a Spaniard smoking a pipe—a long Arab pipe—in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Pécuchet consulted the *Biographie Universelle*, and undertook to revise Dumas from the point of view of science.

The author in *Les Deux Dianes* makes a mistake with regard to dates. The marriage of the Dauphin, Francis, took place on the th of October, , and not on the th of May, . How does he know (see *Le Page du Duc de Savoie*) that Catherine de Medicis, after her husband's death, wished to resume the war? It is not very probable that the Duke of Anjou was crowned at night in a church, an episode which adorns *La Dame de Montsoreau*. *La Reine Margot* especially swarms with errors. The Duke of Nevers was not absent. He gave his opinion at the council before the feast of St. Bartholomew, and Henry of Navarre did not follow the procession four days after. Henry III. did not come back from Poland so

quickly. Besides, how many flimsy devices! The miracle of the hawthorn, the balcony of Charles IX., the poisoned glass of Jeanne d'Albret—Pécuchet no longer had any confidence in Dumas.

He even lost all respect for Walter Scott on account of the oversights in his *Quentin Durward*. The murder of the Archbishop of Liège is anticipated by fifteen years. The wife of Robert de Lamarck was Jeanne d'Arschel and not Hameline de Croy. Far from being killed by a soldier, he was put to death by Maximilian; and the face of Temeraire, when his corpse was found, did not express any menace, inasmuch as the wolves had half devoured it.

None the less, Bouvard went on with Walter Scott, but ended by getting weary of the repetition of the same effects. The heroine usually lives in the country with her father, and the lover, a plundered heir, is re-established in his rights and triumphs over his rivals. There are always a mendicant philosopher, a morose nobleman, pure young girls, facetious retainers, and interminable dialogues, stupid prudishness, and an utter absence of depth.

In his dislike to bric-à-brac, Bouvard took up George Sand.

He went into raptures over the beautiful adulteresses and noble lovers, would have liked to be Jacques, Simon, Lélio, and to have lived in Venice. He uttered sighs, did not know what was the matter with him, and felt himself changed.

Pécuchet, who was working up historical literature studied plays. He swallowed two *Pharamonds*, three *Clovises*, four *Charlemagnes*, several *Philip Augustuses*, a crowd of *Joan of Arcs*, many *Marquises de Pompadours*, and some *Conspiracies of Cellamare*.

Nearly all of them appeared still more stupid than the romances. For there exists for the stage a conventional history which nothing can destroy. Louis XI. will not fail to kneel before the little images in his hat; Henry IV. will be constantly jovial, Mary Stuart tearful, Richelieu cruel; in short, all the characters seem taken from a single block, from love of simplicity and regard for ignorance, so that the playwright, far from elevating, lowers, and, instead of instructing, stupefies.

As Bouvard had spoken eulogistically to him about George Sand, Pécuchet proceeded to read *Consuelo*, *Horace*, and *Mauprat*, was

beguiled by the author's vindication of the oppressed, the socialistic and republican aspect of her works, and the discussions contained in them.

According to Bouvard, however, these elements spoiled the story, and he asked for love-tales at the circulating library.

They read aloud, one after the other, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Delphine*, *Adolphe*, and *Ourika*. But the listener's yawns proved contagious, for the book slipped out of the reader's hand to the floor.

They found fault with the last-mentioned works for making no reference to the environment, the period, the costume of the various personages. The heart alone is the theme—nothing but sentiment! as if there were nothing else in the world.

They next went in for novels of the humorous order, such as the *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*, by Xavier de Maistre, and *Sous les Tilleuls*, by Alphonse Karr. In books of this description the author must interrupt the narrative in order to talk about his dog, his slippers, or his mistress.

A style so free from formality charmed them at first, then appeared stupid to them, for the author effaces his work while displaying in it his personal surroundings.

Through need of the dramatic element, they plunged into romances of adventure. The more entangled, extraordinary, and impossible the plot was, the more it interested them. They did their best to foresee the *dénouement*, became very excited over it, and tired themselves out with a piece of child's play unworthy of serious minds.

The work of Balzac amazed them like a Babylon, and at the same time like grains of dust under the microscope.

In the most commonplace things arise new aspects. They never suspected that there were such depths in modern life.

"What an observer!" exclaimed Bouvard.

"For my part I consider him chimerical," Pécuchet ended by declaring. "He believes in the occult sciences, in monarchy, in rank; is dazzled by rascals; turns up millions for you like centimes; and middle-class people are not with him middle-class people at all, but giants. Why inflate what is unimportant, and waste description on silly things? He wrote one novel on chemistry, another on banking, another on printing-machines,

just as one Ricard produced *The Cabman*, *The Water-Carrier* and *The Cocoa-Nut Seller*. We should soon have books on every trade and on every province; then on every town and on the different stories of every house, and on every individual—which would be no longer literature but statistics or ethnography."

The process was of little consequence in Bouvard's estimation. He wanted to get information—to acquire a deeper knowledge of human nature. He read Paul de Kock again, and ran through the *Old Hermits of the Chaussée d'Antin*.

"Why lose one's time with such absurdities?" said Pécuchet.

"But they might be very interesting as a series of documents."

"Go away with your documents! I want something to lift me up, and take me away from the miseries of this world."

And Pécuchet, craving for the ideal, led Bouvard unconsciously towards tragedy.

The far-off times in which the action takes place, the interests with which it is concerned, and the high station of its leading personages impressed them with a certain sense of grandeur.

One day Bouvard took up *Athalie*, and recited the dream so well that Pécuchet wished to attempt it in his turn. From the opening sentence his voice got lost in a sort of humming sound. It was monotonous and, though strong, indistinct.

Bouvard, full of experience, advised him, in order to render it well-modulated, to roll it out from the lowest tone to the highest, and to draw it back by making use of an ascending and descending scale; and he himself went through this exercise every morning in bed, according to the precept of the Greeks. Pécuchet, at the time mentioned, worked in the same fashion: each had his door closed, and they went on bawling separately.

The features that pleased them in tragedy were the emphasis, the political declamations, and the maxims on the perversity of things.

They learned by heart the most celebrated dialogues of Racine and Voltaire, and they used to declaim them in the corridor. Bouvard, as if he were at the Théâtre Français, strutted, with his hand on Pécuchet's shoulder, stopping at intervals; and, with rolling eyes, he would open

wide his arms, and accuse the Fates. He would give forth fine bursts of grief from the *Philoctète* of La Harpe, a nice death-rattle from *Gabrielle de Vergy*, and, when he played Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, the way in which he represented that personage gazing at his son while exclaiming, "Monster, worthy of me!" was indeed terrible. Pécuchet forgot his part in it. The ability, and not the will, was what he lacked.

On one occasion, in the *Cléopâtre* of Marmontel, he fancied that he could reproduce the hissing of the asp, just as the automaton invented for the purpose by Vaucanson might have done it. The abortive effort made them laugh all the evening. The tragedy sank in their estimation.

Bouvard was the first to grow tired of it, and, dealing frankly with the subject, demonstrated how artificial and limping it was, the silliness of its incidents, and the absurdity of the disclosures made to confidants.

They then went in for comedy, which is the school for fine shading. Every sentence must be dislocated, every word must be underlined, and every syllable must be weighed. Pécuchet could not manage it, and got quite stranded in *Celimène*. Moreover, he thought the lovers very cold, the disputes a bore, and the valets intolerable—Clitandre and Sganarelle as unreal as Ægistheus and Agamemnon.

There remained the serious comedy or tragedy of everyday life, where we see fathers of families afflicted, servants saving their masters, rich men offering others their fortunes, innocent seamstresses and villainous corrupters, a species which extends from Diderot to Pixérécourt. All these plays preaching about virtue disgusted them by their triviality.

The drama of fascinated them by its movement, its colouring, its youthfulness. They made scarcely any distinction between Victor Hugo, Dumas, or Bouchardy, and the diction was no longer to be pompous or fine, but lyrical, extravagant.

One day, as Bouvard was trying to make Pécuchet understand Frédéric Lemaître's acting, Madame Bordin suddenly presented herself in a green shawl, carrying with her a volume of Pigault-Lebrun, the two gentlemen being so polite as to lend her novels now and then.

"But go on!" for she had been a minute there already, and had listened to them with pleasure.

They hoped she would excuse them. She insisted.

"Faith!" said Bouvard, "there's nothing to prevent——"

Pécuchet, through bashfulness, remarked that he could not act unprepared and without costume.

"To do it effectively, we should need to disguise ourselves!"

And Bouvard looked about for something to put on, but found only the Greek cap, which he snatched up.

As the corridor was not big enough, they went down to the drawing-room. Spiders crawled along the walls, and the geological specimens that encumbered the floor had whitened with their dust the velvet of the armchairs. On the chair which had least dirt on it they spread a cover, so that Madame Bordin might sit down.

It was necessary to give her something good.

Bouvard was in favour of the *Tour de Nesle*. But Pécuchet was afraid of parts which called for too much action.

"She would prefer some classical piece! *Phèdre*, for instance."

"Be it so."

Bouvard set forth the theme: "It is about a queen whose husband has a son by another wife. She has fallen madly in love with the young man. Are we there? Start!

"'Yes, prince! for Theseus I grow faint, I burn— I love him!'"

And, addressing Pécuchet's side-face, he gushed out admiration of his port, his visage, "that charming head"; grieved at not having met him with the Greek fleet; would have gladly been lost with him in the labyrinth.

The border of the red cap bent forward amorously, and his trembling voice and his appealing face begged of the cruel one to take pity on a hopeless flame.

Pécuchet, turning aside, breathed hard to emphasise his emotion.

Madame Bordin, without moving, kept her eyes wide open, as if gazing at people whirling round; Mélie was listening behind the door; Gorju, in his shirt-sleeves, was staring at them through the window. Bouvard made a dash into the second part. His acting gave expression to the delirium of the senses, remorse, despair; and he flung himself on the imaginary sword of Pécuchet with such violence that, slipping over some of the stone specimens, he was near tumbling on the ground.

"Pay no attention! Then Theseus arrives, and she poisons herself."

"Poor woman!" said Madame Bordin.

After this they begged of her to choose a piece for them.

She felt perplexed about making a selection. She had seen only three pieces: *Robert le Diable* in the capital, *Le Jeune Mari* at Rouen, and another at Falaise which was very funny, and which was called *La Brouette du Vinaigrier*.

Finally, Bouvard suggested to her the great scene of Tartuffe in the second act.

Pécuchet thought an explanation was desirable:

"You must know that Tartuffe——"

Madame Bordin interrupted him: "We know what a Tartuffe is."

Bouvard had wished for a robe for a certain passage.

"I see only the monk's habit," said Pécuchet.

"No matter; bring it here."

He reappeared with it and a copy of Molière.

The opening was tame, but at the place where Tartuffe caresses Elmire's knees, Pécuchet assumed the tone of a gendarme:

"*What is your hand doing there?*"

Bouvard instantly replied in a sugary voice:

"*I am feeling your dress; the stuff of it is marrowy.*"

And he shot forth glances from his eyes, bent forward his mouth, sniffed with an exceedingly lecherous air, and ended by even addressing himself to Madame Bordin.

His impassioned gaze embarrassed her, and when he stopped, humble and palpitating, she almost sought for something to say in reply.

Pécuchet took refuge in the book: "*The declaration is quite gallant.*"

"Ha! yes," cried she; "he is a bold wheedler."

"Is it not so?" returned Bouvard confidently. "But here's another with a more modern touch about it." And, having opened his coat, he squatted over a piece of ashlar, and, with his head thrown back, burst forth:

"Your eyes' bright flame my vision floods with joy. Sing me some song like those, in bygone years, You sang at eve, your dark eye filled with tears."

"That is like me," she thought.

"Drink and be merry! let the wine-cup flow: Give me this hour, and all the rest may go!"

"How droll you are!" And she laughed with a little laugh, which made her throat rise up, and exposed her teeth.

"Ah! say, is it not sweet To love and see your lover at your feet?"

He knelt down.

"Finish, then."

"'Oh! let me sleep and dream upon thy breast, My beauty, Doña Sol, my love!'

"Here the bells are heard, and they are disturbed by a mountaineer."

"Fortunately; for, but for that——" And Madame Bordin smiled, in place of finishing the sentence.

It was getting dark. She arose.

It had been raining a short time before, and the path through the beech grove not being dry enough, it was more convenient to return across the fields. Bouvard accompanied her into the garden, in order to open the gate for her.

At first they walked past the trees cut like distaffs, without a word being spoken on either side. He was still moved by his declamation, and she, at the bottom of her heart, felt a certain kind of fascination, a charm which was generated by the influence of literature. There are occasions when art excites commonplace natures; and worlds may be unveiled by the clumsiest interpreters.

The sun had reappeared, making the leaves glisten, and casting luminous spots here and there amongst the brakes. Three sparrows with little chirpings hopped on the trunk of an old linden tree which had fallen to the ground. A hawthorn in blossom exhibited its pink sheath; lilacs drooped, borne down by their foliage.

"Ah! that does one good!" said Bouvard, inhaling the air till it filled his lungs.

"You are so painstaking."

"It is not that I have talent; but as for fire, I possess some of that."

"One can see," she returned, pausing between the words, "that you—were in love—in your early days."

"Only in my early days, you believe?"

She stopped. "I know nothing about it."

"What does she mean?" And Bouvard felt his heart beating.

A little pool in the middle of the gravel obliging them to step aside, they got up on the hedgerow.

Then they chatted about the recital.

"What is the name of your last piece?"

"It is taken from *Hernani*, a drama."

"Ha!" then slowly and as if in soliloquy, "it must be nice to have a gentleman say such things to you—in downright earnest."

"I am at your service," replied Bouvard.

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"What a joke!"

"Not the least in the world!"

And, having cast a look about him, he caught her from behind round the waist and kissed the nape of her neck vigorously.

She became very pale as if she were going to faint, and leaned one hand against a tree, then opened her eyes and shook her head.

"It is past."

He looked at her in amazement.

The grating being open, she got up on the threshold of the little gateway.

There was a water-channel at the opposite side. She gathered up all the folds of her petticoat and stood on the brink hesitatingly.

"Do you want my assistance?"

"Unnecessary."

"Why not?"

"Ha! you are too dangerous!" And as she jumped down, he could see her white stocking.

Bouvard blamed himself for having wasted an opportunity. Bah! he should have one again—and then not all women are alike. With some of them you must be blunt, while audacity destroys you with others. In short, he was satisfied with himself—and he did not confide his hope to Pécuchet; this was through fear of the remarks that would be passed, and not at all through delicacy.

From that time forth they used to recite in the presence of Mélie and Gorju, all the time regretting that they had not a private theatre.

The little servant-girl was amused without understanding a bit of it, wondering at the language, charmed at the roll of the verses. Gorju applauded the philosophic passages in the tragedies, and everything in the people's favour in the melodramas, so that, delighted at his good taste, they thought of giving him lessons, with a view to making an actor of him subsequently. This prospect dazzled the workman.

Their performances by this time became the subject of general gossip. Vaucorbeil spoke to them about the matter in a sly fashion. Most people regarded their acting with contempt.

They only prided themselves the more upon it. They crowned themselves artists. Pécuchet wore moustaches, and Bouvard thought he could not do anything better, with his round face and his bald patch, than to give himself a head *à la* Béranger. Finally, they determined to write a play.

The subject was the difficulty. They searched for it while they were at breakfast, and drank coffee, a stimulant indispensable for the brain, then two or three little glasses. They would next take a nap on their beds, after which they would make their way down to the fruit garden and take a turn there; and at length they would leave the house to find inspiration outside, and, after walking side by side, they would come back quite worn out.

Or else they would shut themselves up together. Bouvard would sweep the table, lay down paper in front of him, dip his pen, and remain with his eyes on the ceiling; whilst Pécuchet, in the armchair, would be plunged in meditation, with his legs stretched out and his head down.

Sometimes they felt a shivering sensation, and, as it were, the passing breath of an idea, but at the very moment when they were seizing it, it had vanished.

But methods exist for discovering subjects. You take a title at random, and a fact trickles out of it. You develop a proverb; you combine a number of adventures so as to form only one. None of these devices came to anything. In vain they ran through collections of anecdotes, several volumes of celebrated trials, and a heap of historical works.

And they dreamed of being acted at the Odéon, had their thoughts fixed on theatrical performances, and sighed for Paris.

"I was born to be an author instead of being buried in the country!" said Bouvard.

"And I likewise," chimed in Pécuchet.

Then came an illumination to their minds. If they had so much trouble about it, the reason was their ignorance of the rules.

They studied them in the *Pratique du Théâtre*, by D'Aubignac, and in some works not quite so old-fashioned.

Important questions are discussed in them: Whether comedy can be written in verse; whether tragedy does not go outside its limits by taking its subject from modern history; whether the heroes ought to be virtuous; what kinds of villains it allows; up to what point horrors are permissible in it; that the details should verge towards a single end; that the interest should increase; that the conclusion should harmonise with the opening—these were unquestionable propositions.

"Invent resorts that can take hold of me,"

says Boileau. By what means were they to "invent resorts?"

"So that in all your speeches passion's dart May penetrate, and warm, and move the heart."

How were they to "warm the heart?"

Rules, therefore, were not sufficient; there was need, in addition, for genius. And genius is not sufficient either. Corneille, according to the French Academy, understands nothing about the stage; Geoffroy disparaged Voltaire; Souligny scoffed at Racine; La Harpe blushed at Shakespeare's name.

Becoming disgusted with the old criticism, they wished to make acquaintance with the new, and sent for the notices of plays in the newspapers.

What assurance! What obstinacy! What dishonesty! Outrages on masterpieces; respect shown for platitudes; the gross ignorance of those who pass for scholars, and the stupidity of others whom they describe as witty.

Perhaps it is to the public that one must appeal.

But works that have been applauded sometimes displeased them, and amongst plays that were hissed there were some that they admired.

Thus the opinions of persons of taste are unreliable, while the judgment of the multitude is incomprehensible.

Bouvard submitted the problem to Barberou. Pécuchet, on his side, wrote to Dumouchel.

The ex-commercial traveller was astonished at the effeminacy engendered by provincial life. His old Bouvard was turning into a blockhead; in short, "he was no longer in it at all."

"The theatre is an article of consumption like any other. It is advertised in the newspapers. We go to the theatre to be amused. The good thing is the thing that amuses."

"But, idiot," exclaimed Pécuchet, "what amuses you is not what amuses me; and the others, as well as yourself, will be weary of it by and by. If plays are written expressly to be acted, how is it that the best of them can be always read?"

And he awaited Dumouchel's reply. According to the professor, the immediate fate of a play proved nothing. The *Misanthrope* and *Athalie* are dying out. *Zaïre* is no longer understood. Who speaks to-day of Ducange or of Picard? And he recalled all the great contemporary successes from *Fanchon la Vielleuse* to *Gaspardo le Pêcheur*, and deplored the decline of our stage. The cause of it is the contempt for literature, or rather for style; and, with the aid of certain authors mentioned by Dumouchel, they learned the secret of the various styles; how we get the majestic, the temperate, the ingenuous, the touches that are noble and the expressions that are low. "Dogs" may be heightened by "devouring"; "to vomit" is to be used only figuratively; "fever" is applied to the passions; "valiance" is beautiful in verse.

"Suppose we made verses?" said Pécuchet.

"Yes, later. Let us occupy ourselves with prose first."

A strict recommendation is given to choose a classic in order to mould yourself upon it; but all of them have their dangers, and not only have they sinned in point of style, but still more in point of phraseology.

This assertion disconcerted Bouvard and Pécuchet, and they set about studying grammar.

Has the French language, in its idiomatic structure definite articles and indefinite, as in Latin? Some think that it has, others that it has not. They did not venture to decide.

The subject is always in agreement with the verb, save on the occasions when the subject is not in agreement with it.

There was formerly no distinction between the verbal adjective and the present participle; but the Academy lays down one not very easy to grasp.

They were much pleased to learn that the pronoun *leur* is used for persons, but also for things, while *où* and *en* are used for things and sometimes for persons.

Ought we to say *Cette femme a l'air bon* or *l'air bonne*?—*une bûche de bois sec*, or *de bois sèche*?—*ne pas laisser de*, or *que de*?—*une troupe de voleurs survint*, or *survinrent*?

Other difficulties: *Autour* and *à l'entour* of which Racine and Boileau did not see the difference; *imposer*, or *en imposer*, synonyms with Massillon and Voltaire; *croasser* and *coasser*, confounded by La Fontaine, who knew, however, how to distinguish a crow from a frog.

The grammarians, it is true, are at variance. Some see a beauty where others discover a fault. They admit principles of which they reject the consequences, announce consequences of which they repudiate the principles, lean on tradition, throw over the masters, and adopt whimsical refinements.

Ménage, instead of *lentilles* and *cassonade*, approves of *nentilles* and *castonade*; Bonhours, *jérarchie* and not *hiérarchie* and M. Chapsal speaks of *les œils de la soupe*.

Pécuchet was amazed above all at Jénin. What! *z'annetons* would be better than *hannetons*, *z'aricots* than *haricots*! and, under Louis XIV., the pronunciation was *Roume* and *Monsieur de Lioune*, instead of *Rome* and *Monsieur de Lionne*!

Littré gave them the finishing stroke by declaring that there never had been, and never could be positive orthography. They concluded that syntax is a whim and grammar an illusion.

At this period, moreover, a new school of rhetoric declared that we should write as we speak, and that all would be well so long as we felt and observed.

As they had felt and believed that they had observed, they considered themselves qualified to write. A play is troublesome on account of the narrowness of its framework, but the novel has more freedom. In order to write one they searched among their personal recollections.

Pécuchet recalled to mind one of the head-clerks in his own office, a very nasty customer, and he felt a longing to take revenge on him by means of a book.

Bouvard had, at the smoking saloon, made the acquaintance of an old writing-master, who was a miserable drunkard. Nothing could be so ludicrous as this character.

At the end of the week, they imagined that they could fuse these two subjects into one. They left off there, and passed on to the following: a woman who causes the unhappiness of a family; a wife, her husband, and her lover; a woman who would be virtuous through a defect in her conformation; an ambitious man; a bad priest. They tried to bind together with these vague conceptions things supplied by their memory, and then made abridgments or additions.

Pécuchet was for sentiment and ideality, Bouvard for imagery and colouring; and they began to understand each other no longer, each wondering that the other should be so shallow.

The science which is known as æsthetics would perhaps settle their differences. A friend of Dumouchel, a professor of philosophy, sent them a list of works on the subject. They worked separately and communicated their ideas to one another.

In the first place, what is the Beautiful?

For Schelling, it is the infinite expressing itself through the finite; for Reid, an occult quality; for Jouffroy, an indecomposable fact; for De Maistre, that which is pleasing to virtue; for P. André, that which agrees with reason.

And there are many kinds of beauty: a beauty in the sciences—geometry is beautiful; a beauty in morals—it cannot be denied that the death of Socrates was beautiful; a beauty in the animal kingdom—the

beauty of the dog consists in his sense of smell. A pig could not be beautiful, having regard to his dirty habits; no more could a serpent, for it awakens in us ideas of vileness. The flowers, the butterflies, the birds may be beautiful. Finally, the first condition of beauty is unity in variety: there is the principle.

"Yet," said Bouvard, "two squint eyes are more varied than two straight eyes, and produce an effect which is not so good—as a rule."

They entered upon the question of the Sublime.

Certain objects are sublime in themselves: the noise of a torrent, profound darkness, a tree flung down by the storm. A character is beautiful when it triumphs, and sublime when it struggles.

"I understand," said Bouvard; "the Beautiful is the beautiful, and the Sublime the very beautiful."

But how were they to be distinguished?

"By means of tact," answered Pécuchet.

"And tact—where does that come from?"

"From taste."

"What is taste?"

It is defined as a special discernment, a rapid judgment, the power of distinguishing certain relationships.

"In short, taste is taste; but all that does not tell the way to have it."

It is necessary to observe the proprieties. But the proprieties vary; and, let a work be ever so beautiful, it will not be always irreproachable. There is, however, a beauty which is indestructible, and of whose laws we are ignorant, for its genesis is mysterious.

Since an idea cannot be interpreted in every form, we ought to recognise limits amongst the arts, and in each of the arts many forms; but combinations arise in which the style of one will enter into another without the ill result of deviating from the end—of not being true.

The too rigid application of truth is hurtful to beauty, and preoccupation with beauty impedes truth. However, without an ideal there is no truth; this is why types are of a more continuous reality than portraits. Art, besides, only aims at verisimilitude; but verisimilitude depends on the observer, and is a relative and transitory thing.

So they got lost in discussions. Bouvard believed less and less in æsthetics.

"If it is not a humbug, its correctness will be demonstrated by examples. Now listen."

And he read a note which had called for much research on his part:

"'Bouhours accuses Tacitus of not having the simplicity which history demands. M. Droz, a professor, blames Shakespeare for his mixture of the serious and the comic. Nisard, another professor, thinks that André Chénier is, as a poet, beneath the seventeenth century. Blair, an Englishman, finds fault with the picture of the harpies in Virgil. Marmontel groans over the liberties taken by Homer. Lamotte does not admit the immortality of his heroes. Vida is indignant at his similes. In short, all the makers of rhetorics, poetics, and æsthetics, appear to me idiots."

"You are exaggerating," said Pécuchet.

He was disturbed by doubts; for, if (as Longinus observes) ordinary minds are incapable of faults, the faults must be associated with the masters, and we are bound to admire them. This is going too far. However, the masters are the masters. He would have liked to make the doctrines harmonise with the works, the critics with the poets, to grasp the essence of the Beautiful; and these questions exercised him so much that his bile was stirred up. He got a jaundice from it.

It was at its crisis when Marianne, Madame Bordin's cook, came with a request from her mistress for an interview with Bouvard.

The widow had not made her appearance since the dramatic performance. Was this an advance? But why should she employ Marianne as an intermediary? And all night Bouvard's imagination wandered.

Next day, about two o'clock, he was walking in the corridor, and glancing out through the window from time to time. The door-bell rang. It was the notary.

He crossed the threshold, ascended the staircase, and seated himself in the armchair, and, after a preliminary exchange of courtesies, said that, tired of waiting for Madame Bordin, he had started before her. She wished to buy the Ecalles from him.

Bouvard experienced a kind of chilling sensation, and he hurried towards Pécuchet's room.

Pécuchet did not know what reply to make. He was in an anxious frame of mind, as M. Vaucorbeil was to be there presently.

At length Madame Bordin arrived. The delay was explained by the manifest attention she had given to her toilette, which consisted of a cashmere frock, a hat, and fine kid gloves—a costume befitting a serious occasion.

After much frivolous preliminary talk she asked whether a thousand crown-pieces would not be sufficient.

"One acre! A thousand crown-pieces! Never!"

She half closed her eyes. "Oh! for me!"

And all three remained silent.

M. de Faverges entered. He had a morocco case under his arm, like a solicitor; and, depositing it on the table, said:

"These are pamphlets! They deal with reform—a burning question; but here is a thing which no doubt belongs to you."

And he handed Bouvard the second volume of the *Mémoires du Diable*.

Mélie, just now, had been reading it in the kitchen; and, as one ought to watch over the morals of persons of that class, he thought he was doing the right thing in confiscating the book.

Bouvard had lent it to his servant-maid. They chatted about novels. Madame Bordin liked them when they were not dismal.

"Writers," said M. de Faverges, "paint life in colours that are too flattering."

"It is necessary to paint," urged Bouvard.

"Then nothing can be done save to follow the example."

"It is not a question of example."

"At least, you will admit that they might fall into the hands of a young daughter. I have one."

"And a charming one!" said the notary, with the expression of countenance he wore on the days of marriage contracts.

"Well, for her sake, or rather for that of the persons that surround her, I prohibit them in my house, for the people, my dear sir——"

"What have the people done?" said Vaucorbeil, appearing suddenly at the door.

Pécuchet, who had recognised his voice, came to mingle with the company.

"I maintain," returned the count, "that it is necessary to prevent them from reading certain books."

Vaucorbeil observed: "Then you are not in favour of education?"

"Yes, certainly. Allow me——"

"When every day," said Marescot, "an attack is made on the government."

"Where's the harm?"

And the nobleman and the physician proceeded to disparage Louis Philippe, recalling the Pritchard case, and the September laws against the liberty of the press:

"And that of the stage," added Pécuchet.

Marescot could stand this no longer.

"It goes too far, this stage of yours!"

"That I grant you," said the count—"plays that glorify suicide."

"Suicide is a fine thing! Witness Cato," protested Pécuchet.

Without replying to the argument, M. de Faverges stigmatised those works in which the holiest things are scoffed at: the family, property, marriage.

"Well, and Molière?" said Bouvard.

Marescot, a man of literary taste, retorted that Molière would not pass muster any longer, and was, furthermore, a little overrated.

"Finally," said the count, "Victor Hugo has been pitiless—yes, pitiless—towards Marie Antoinette, by dragging over the hurdle the type of the Queen in the character of Mary Tudor."

"What!" exclaimed Bouvard, "I, an author, I have no right——"

"No, sir, you have no right to show us crime without putting beside it a corrective—without presenting to us a lesson."

Vaucorbeil thought also that art ought to have an object—to aim at the improvement of the masses. "Let us chant science, our discoveries, patriotism," and he broke into admiration of Casimir Delavigne.

Madame Bordin praised the Marquis de Foudras.

The notary replied: "But the language—are you thinking of that?"

"The language? How?"

"He refers to the style," said Pécuchet. "Do you consider his works well written?"

"No doubt, exceedingly interesting."

He shrugged his shoulders, and she blushed at the impertinence.

Madame Bordin had several times attempted to come back to her own business transaction. It was too late to conclude it. She went off on Marescot's arm.

The count distributed his pamphlets, requesting them to hand them round to other people.

Vaucorbeil was leaving, when Pécuchet stopped him.

"You are forgetting me, doctor."

His yellow physiognomy was pitiable, with his moustaches and his black hair, which was hanging down under a silk handkerchief badly fastened.

"Purge yourself," said the doctor. And, giving him two little slaps as if to a child: "Too much nerves, too much artist!"

"No, surely!"

They summed up what they had just heard. The morality of art is contained for every person in that which flatters that person's interests. No one has any love for literature.

After this they turned over the count's pamphlets.

They found in all of a demand for universal suffrage.

"It seems to me," said Pécuchet, "that we shall soon have some squabbling."

For he saw everything in dark colours, perhaps on account of his jaundice.

CHAPTER VI.

Revolt of the People.

In the morning of the th of February, , the news was brought to Chavignolles, by a person who had come from Falaise, that Paris was covered with barricades, and the next day the proclamation of the Republic was posted up outside the mayor's office.

This great event astonished the inhabitants.

But when they learned that the Court of Cassation, the Court of Appeal, the Court of Exchequer, the Chamber of Notaries, the order of advocates, the Council of State, the University, the generals, and M. de la Roche-Jacquelein himself had given promise of their adherence to the provisional government, their breasts began to expand; and, as trees of liberty were planted at Paris, the municipal council decided that they ought to have them at Chavignolles.

Bouvard made an offer of one, his patriotism exulting in the triumph of the people; as for Pécuchet, the fall of royalty confirmed his anticipations so exactly that he must needs be satisfied.

Gorju, obeying them with zeal, removed one of the poplar trees that skirted the meadow above La Butte, and transported it to "the Cows' Pass," at the entrance of the village, the place appointed for the purpose.

Before the hour for the ceremony, all three awaited the procession. They heard a drum beating, and then beheld a silver cross. After this appeared two torches borne by the chanters, then the curé, with stole, surplice, cope, and biretta. Four altar-boys escorted him, a fifth carried the holy-water basin, and in the rear came the sacristan. He got up on the raised edge of the hole in which stood the poplar tree, adorned with tri-coloured ribbons. On the opposite side could be seen the mayor and his two deputies, Beljambe and Marescot; then the principal personages of the district, M. de Faverges, Vaucorbeil, Coulon, the justice of the peace, an old fogy with a sleepy face. Heurtaux wore a foraging-cap, and Alexandre Petit, the new schoolmaster, had put on his frock-coat, a threadbare green garment—his Sunday coat. The firemen, whom Girbal commanded, sword in hand, stood in single file. On the other side shone the white plates of some old shakos of the time of Lafayette—five or six, no more—the National Guard having fallen into desuetude at Chavignolles. Peasants and their wives, workmen from neighbouring factories, and village brats, crowded together in the background; and

Placquevent, the keeper, five feet eight inches in height, kept them in check with a look as he walked to and fro with folded arms.

The curé's speech was like that of other priests in similar circumstances. After thundering against kings, he glorified the Republic. "Do we not say 'the republic of letters,' 'the Christian republic'? What more innocent than the one, more beautiful than the other? Jesus Christ formulated our sublime device: the tree of the people was the tree of the Cross. In order that religion may give her fruits, she has need of charity." And, in the name of charity, the ecclesiastic implored his brethren not to commit any disorder; to return home peaceably.

Then he sprinkled the tree while he invoked the blessing of God. "May it grow, and may it recall to us our enfranchisement from all servitude, and that fraternity more bountiful than the shade of its branches. Amen."

Some voices repeated "Amen"; and, after an interval of drum-beating, the clergy, chanting a *Te Deum*, returned along the road to the church.

Their intervention had produced an excellent effect. The simple saw in it a promise of happiness, the patriotic a mark of deference, a sort of homage rendered to their principles.

Bouvard and Pécuchet thought they should have been thanked for their present, or at least that an allusion should have been made to it; and they unbosomed themselves on the subject to Faverges and the doctor.

What mattered wretched considerations of that sort? Vaucorbeil was delighted with the Revolution; so was the count. He execrated the Orléans family. They would never see them any more! Good-bye to them! All for the people henceforth! And followed by Hurel, his factotum, he went to meet the curé.

Foureau was walking with his head down, between the notary and the innkeeper, irritated by the ceremony, as he was apprehensive of a riot; and instinctively he turned round towards Placquevent, who, together with the captain, gave vent to loud regrets at Girbal's unsatisfactoriness and the sorry appearance of his men.

Some workmen passed along the road singing the "Marseillaise," with Gorju among them brandishing a stick; Petit was escorting them, with fire in his eyes.

"I don't like that!" said Marescot. "They are making a great outcry, and getting too excited."

"Oh, bless my soul!" replied Coulon; "young people must amuse themselves."

Foureau heaved a sigh. "Queer amusement! and then the guillotine at the end of it!" He had visions of the scaffold, and was anticipating horrors.

Chavignolles felt the rebound of the agitation in Paris. The villagers subscribed to the newspapers. Every morning people crowded to the post-office, and the postmistress would not have been able to get herself free from them had it not been for the captain, who sometimes assisted her. Then would follow a chat on the green.

The first violent discussion was on the subject of Poland.

Heurtaux and Bouvard called for its liberation.

M. de Faverges took a different view.

"What right have we to go there? That would be to let loose Europe against us. No imprudence!"

And everybody approving of this, the two Poles held their tongues.

On another occasion, Vaucorbeil spoke in favour of Ledru-Rollin's circulars.

Foureau retorted with a reference to the forty-five centimes.

"But the government," said Pécuchet, "has suppressed slavery."

"What does slavery matter to me?"

"Well, what about the abolition of the death-penalty in political cases?"

"Faith," replied Foureau, "they would like to abolish everything. However, who knows? the tenants are already showing themselves very exacting."

"So much the better! The proprietors," according to Pécuchet, "had been too much favoured. He that owns an estate——"

Foureau and Marescot interrupted him, exclaiming that he was a communist.

"I—a communist!"

And all kept talking at the same time. When Pécuchet proposed to establish a club, Foureau had the hardihood to reply that they would never see such a thing at Chavignolles.

After this, Gorju demanded guns for the National Guard, the general opinion having fixed on him as instructor. The only guns in the place were those of the firemen. Girbal had possession of them. Foureau did not care to deliver them up.

Gorju looked at him.

"You will find, however, that I know how to use them."

For he added to his other occupations that of poaching, and the innkeeper often bought from him a hare or a rabbit.

"Faith! take them!" said Foureau.

The same evening they began drilling. It was under the lawn, in front of the church. Gorju, in a blue smock-frock, with a neckcloth around his loins, went through the movements in an automatic fashion. When he gave the orders, his voice was gruff.

"Draw in your bellies!"

And immediately, Bouvard, keeping back his breath, drew in his stomach, and stretched out his buttocks.

"Good God! you're not told to make an arch."

Pécuchet confused the ranks and the files, half-turns to the right and half-turns to the left; but the most pitiable sight was the schoolmaster: weak and of a slim figure, with a ring of fair beard around his neck, he staggered under the weight of his gun, the bayonet of which incommoded his neighbours.

They wore trousers of every colour, dirty shoulder-belts, old regimentals that were too short, leaving their shirts visible over their flanks; and each of them pretended that he had not the means of doing otherwise. A subscription was started to clothe the poorest of them. Foureau was niggardly, while women made themselves conspicuous. Madame Bordin gave five francs, in spite of her hatred of the Republic. M. de Faverges equipped a dozen men, and was not missing at the drill. Then he took up his quarters at the grocer's, and gave those who came in first a drink.

The powerful then began fawning on the lower class. Everyone went after the working-men. People intrigued for the favour of being associated with them. They became nobles.

Those of the canton were, for the most part, weavers; others worked in the cotton mills or at a paper factory lately established.

Gorju fascinated them by his bluster, taught them the shoe trick, and brought those whom he treated as chums to Madame Castillon's house for a drink.

But the peasants were more numerous, and on market days M. de Faverges would walk about the green, make inquiries as to their wants, and try to convert them to his own ideas. They listened without answering, like Père Gouy, ready to accept any government so long as it reduced the taxes.

By dint of babbling, Gorju was making a name for himself. Perhaps they might send him into the Assembly!

M. de Faverges also was thinking of it, while seeking not to compromise himself.

The Conservatives oscillated between Foureau and Marescot, but, as the notary stuck to his office, Foureau was chosen—a boor, an idiot. The doctor waxed indignant. Rejected in the competition, he regretted Paris, and the consciousness of his wasted life gave him a morose air. A more distinguished career was about to open for him—what a revenge! He drew up a profession of faith, and went to read it to MM. Bouvard and Pécuchet.

They congratulated him upon it. Their opinions were identical with his. However, they wrote better, had a knowledge of history, and could cut as good a figure as he in the Chamber. Why not? But which of them ought to offer himself? And they entered upon a contest of delicacy.

Pécuchet preferred that it should be his friend rather than himself.

"No, it suits you better! you have a better deportment!"

"Perhaps so," returned Bouvard, "but you have a better tuft of hair!" And, without solving the difficulty, they arranged their plans of conduct.

This vertigo of deputyship had seized on others. The captain dreamed of it under his foraging-cap while puffing at his pipe, and the schoolmaster too in his school, and the curé also between two prayers,

so that he sometimes surprised himself with his eyes towards heaven, in the act of saying, "Grant, O my God, that I may be a deputy!"

The doctor having received some encouragement, repaired to the house of Heurtaux, and explained to him what his chances were. The captain did not stand on ceremony about it. Vaucorbeil was known, undoubtedly, but little liked by his professional brethren, especially in the case of chemists. Everyone would bark at him; the people did not want a gentleman; his best patients would leave him. And, when he weighed these arguments, the physician regretted his weakness.

As soon as he had gone, Heurtaux went to see Placquevent. Between old soldiers there should be mutual courtesy, but the rural guard, devoted though he was to Foureau, flatly refused to help him.

The curé demonstrated to M. de Faverges that the hour had not come. It was necessary to give the Republic time to get used up.

Bouvard and Pécuchet represented to Gorju that he would never be strong enough to overcome the coalition of the peasants and the village shop-keepers, filled him with uncertainty, and deprived him of all confidence.

Petit, through pride, had allowed his ambition to be seen. Beljambe warned him that, if he failed, his dismissal was certain.

Finally, the curé got orders from the bishop to keep quiet.

Then, only Foureau remained.

Bouvard and Pécuchet opposed him, bringing up against him his unfriendly attitude about the guns, his opposition to the club, his reactionary views, his avarice; and even persuaded Gouy that he wished to bring back the old *régime*. Vague as was the meaning of this word to the peasant's mind, he execrated it with a hatred that had accumulated in the souls of his forefathers throughout ten centuries; and he turned all his relatives, and those of his wife, brothers-in-law, cousins, grand-nephews (a horde of them), against Foureau.

Gorju, Vaucorbeil, and Petit kept working for the overthrow of the mayor; and, the ground being thus cleared, Bouvard and Pécuchet, without any doubt, were likely to succeed.

They drew lots to know which would present himself. The drawing decided nothing, and they went to consult the doctor on the subject.

He had news for them: Flacardoux, editor of *Le Calvados*, had announced his candidature. The two friends had a keen sense of having been deceived. Each felt the other's disappointment more than his own. But politics had an exciting influence on them. When the election-day arrived they went to inspect the urns. Flacardoux had carried it!

M. de Faverges had fallen back on the National Guard, without obtaining the epaulet of commander. The people of Chavignolles contrived to get Beljambe nominated.

This favouritism on the part of the public, so whimsical and unforeseen, dismayed Heurtaux. He had neglected his duties, confining himself to inspecting the military operations now and then, and giving utterance to a few remarks. No matter! He considered it a monstrous thing that an innkeeper should be preferred to one who had been formerly a captain in the Imperial service, and he said, after the invasion of the Chamber on the th of May: "If the military grades give themselves away like that in the capital, I shall be no longer astonished at what may happen."

The reaction began.

People believed in Louis Blanc's pineapple soup, in Flocon's bed of gold, and Ledru-Rollin's royal orgies; and as the province pretends to know everything that happens in Paris, the inhabitants of Chavignolles had no doubt about these inventions, and gave credence to the most absurd reports.

M. de Faverges one evening came to look for the curé, in order to tell him that the Count de Chambord had arrived in Normandy.

Joinville, according to Foureau, had made preparations with his sailors to put down "these socialists of yours." Heurtaux declared that Louis Napoleon would shortly be consul.

The factories had stopped. Poor people wandered in large groups about the country.

One Sunday (it was in the early days of June) a gendarme suddenly started in the direction of Falaise. The workmen of Acqueville, Liffard, Pierre-Pont, and Saint-Rémy were marching on Chavignolles. The sheds were shut up. The municipal council assembled and passed a resolution, to prevent catastrophes, that no resistance should be offered. The

gendarmes were kept in, and orders were given to them not to show themselves. Soon was heard, as it were, the rumbling of a storm. Then the song of the Girondists shook the windows, and men, arm in arm, passed along the road from Caen, dusty, sweating, in rags. They filled up the entire space in front of the council chamber, and a great hurly-burly arose.

Gorju and two of his comrades entered the chamber. One of them was lean and wretched-looking, with a knitted waistcoat, the ribbons of which were hanging down; the other, black as coal—a machinist, no doubt—with hair like a brush, thick eyebrows, and old list shoes. Gorju, like a hussar, wore his waistcoat slung over his shoulder.

All three remained standing, and the councillors, seated round the table, which was covered with a blue cloth, gazed at their faces, pale from privation.

"Citizens!" said Gorju, "we want work."

The mayor trembled. He could not find his voice.

Marescot replied from the place where he sat that the council would consider the matter directly; and when the comrades had gone out they discussed several suggestions.

The first was to have stones drawn.

In order to utilise the stones, Girbal proposed a road from Angleville to Tournebu.

That from Bayeux had positively rendered the same service.

They could clear out the pond! This was not sufficient as a public work. Or rather, dig a second pond! But in what place?

Langlois' advice was to construct an embankment along the Mortins as a protection against an inundation. It would be better, Beljambe thought, to clear away the heather.

It was impossible to arrive at any conclusion. To appease the crowd, Coulon went down over the peristyle and announced that they were preparing charity workshops.

"Charity! Thanks!" cried Gorju. "Down with the aristocrats! We want the right to work!"

It was the question of the time. He made use of it as a source of popularity. He was applauded.

In turning round he elbowed Bouvard, whom Pécuchet had dragged to the spot, and they entered into conversation. Nothing could keep them back; the municipal building was surrounded; the council could not escape.

"Where shall you get money?" said Bouvard.

"In the rich people's houses. Besides, the government will give orders for public works."

"And if works are not wanted?"

"They will have them made in advance."

"But wages will fall," urged Pécuchet. "When work happens to be lacking, it is because there are too many products; and you demand to have them increased!"

Gorju bit his moustache. "However, with the organisation of labour—__"

"Then the government will be the master!"

Some of those around murmured:

"No, no! no more masters!"

Gorju got angry. "No matter! Workers should be supplied with capital, or rather credit should be established."

"In what way?"

"Ah! I don't know; but credit ought to be established."

"We've had enough of that," said the machinist. "They are only plaguing us, these farce-actors!"

And he climbed up the steps, declaring that he would break open the door.

There he was met by Placquevent, with his right knee bent and his fists clenched:

"Advance one inch further!"

The machinist recoiled. The shouting of the mob reached the chamber. All arose with the desire to run away. The help from Falaise had not arrived. They bewailed the count's absence. Marescot kept twisting a pen; Père Coulon groaned; Heurtaux lashed himself into a fury to make them send for the gendarmes.

"Command them to come!" said Foureau.

"I have no authority."

The noise, however, redoubled. The whole green was covered with people, and they were all staring at the first story of the building when, at the window in the middle, under the clock, Pécuchet made his appearance.

He had ingeniously gone up by the back-stairs, and, wishing to be like Lamartine, he began a harangue to the populace:

"Citizens!—--"

But his cap, his nose, his frock-coat, his entire personality lacked distinction.

The man in the knitted waistcoat asked him:

"Are you a workman?"

"No."

"A master, then?"

"Nor that either."

"Well, take yourself off, then."

"Why?" returned Pécuchet, haughtily.

And the next moment he disappeared, in the machinist's clutch, into the recess of the window.

Gorju came to his assistance. "Let him alone! He's a decent fellow." They clenched.

The door flew open, and Marescot, on the threshold, announced the decision of the council. Hurel had suggested his doing so.

The road from Tournebu would have a branch road in the direction of Angleville and leading towards the château of Faverges.

It was a sacrifice which the commune took upon itself in the interest of the working-men.

They dispersed.

When Bouvard and Pécuchet re-entered their house, women's voices fell upon their ears. The servants and Madame Bordin were breaking into exclamations, the widow's screams being the loudest; and at sight of them she cried:

"Ha! this is very fortunate! I have been waiting for you for the last three hours! My poor garden has not a single tulip left! Filth everywhere on the grass! No way of getting rid of him!"

"Who is it?"

"Père Gouy."

He had come with a cartload of manure, and had scattered it pell-mell over the grass.

"He is now digging it up. Hurry on and make him stop."

"I am going with you," said Bouvard.

At the bottom of the steps outside, a horse in the shafts of a dung-cart was gnawing at a bunch of oleanders. The wheels, in grazing the flower borders, had bruised the box trees, broken a rhododendron, knocked down the dahlias; and clods of black muck, like molehills, embossed the green sward. Gouy was vigorously digging it up.

One day Madame Bordin had carelessly said to him that she would like to have it turned up. He set about the job, and, in spite of her orders to desist, went on with it. This was the way that he interpreted the right to work, Gorju's talk having turned his brain.

He went away only after violent threats from Bouvard.

Madame Bordin, by way of compensation, did not pay for the manual labour, and kept the manure. She was wise: the doctor's wife, and even the notary's, though of higher social position, respected her for it.

The charity workshops lasted a week. No trouble occurred. Gorju left the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, the National Guard was always on foot: on Sunday, a review; military promenades, occasionally; and, every night, patrols. They disturbed the village. They rang the bells of houses for fun; they made their way into the bedrooms where married couples were snoring on the same bolster; then they uttered broad jokes, and the husband, rising, would go and get them a glass each. Afterwards, they would return to the guard-house to play a hundred of dominoes, would consume a quantity of cider there, and eat cheese, while the sentinel, worn out, would keep opening the door every other minute. There was a prevailing absence of discipline, owing to Beljambe's laxity.

When the days of June came, everyone was in favour of "flying to the relief of Paris"; but Foureau could not leave the mayoral premises, Marescot his office, the doctor his patients, or Girbal his firemen. M. de Faverges was at Cherbourg. Beljambe kept his bed. The captain

grumbled: "They did not want me; so much the worse!"—and Bouvard had the wisdom to put restraint on Pécuchet.

The patrols throughout the country were extended farther. They were panic-stricken by the shadow of a haystack, or by the forms of branches. On one occasion the entire National Guard turned and ran. In the moonlight they had observed, under an apple tree, a man with a gun, taking aim at them. At another time, on a dark night, the patrol halting under the beech trees, heard some one close at hand.

"Who is there?"

No answer.

They allowed the person to pursue his course, following him at a distance, for he might have a pistol or a tomahawk; but when they were in the village, within reach of help, the dozen men of the company rushed together upon him, exclaiming:

"Your papers!" They pulled him about and overwhelmed him with insults. The men at the guard-house had gone out. They dragged him there; and by the light of the candle that was burning on top of the stove they at last recognised Gorju.

A wretched greatcoat of lasting was flapping over his shoulders. His toes could be seen through the holes in his boots. Scratches and bruises stained his face with blood. He was fearfully emaciated, and rolled his eyes about like a wolf.

Foureau, coming up speedily, questioned him as to how he chanced to be under the beech trees, what his object was in coming back to Chavignolles, and also as to the employment of his time for the past six weeks.

"That is no business of yours. I have my liberty."

Placquevent searched him to find out whether he had cartridges about him.

They were about to imprison him provisionally.

Bouvard interposed.

"No use," replied the mayor; "we know your opinions."

"Nevertheless——"

"Ha! be careful; I give you warning. Be careful."

Bouvard persisted no further.

Gorju then turned towards Pécuchet: "And you, master, have you not a word to say for me?"

Pécuchet hung down his head, as if he had a suspicion against his innocence.

The poor wretch smiled bitterly.

"I protected you, all the same."

At daybreak, two gendarmes took him to Falaise.

He was not tried before a court-martial, but was sentenced by the civil tribunal to three months' imprisonment for the misdemeanour of language tending towards the destruction of society. From Falaise he wrote to his former employers to send him soon a certificatè of good life and morals, and as their signature required to be legalised by the mayor or the deputy, they preferred to ask Marescot to do this little service for them.

They were introduced into a dining-room, decorated with dishes of fine old earthenware; a Boule clock occupied the narrowest shelf. On the mahogany table, without a cloth, were two napkins, a teapot and finger-glasses. Madame Marescot crossed the room in a dressing-gown of blue cashmere. She was a Parisian who was bored with the country. Then the notary came in, with his cap in one hand, a newspaper in the other; and at once, in the most polite fashion, he affixed his seal, although their *protégé* was a dangerous man.

"Really," said Bouvard, "for a few words——"

"But words lead to crimes, my dear sir, give me leave to say."

"And yet," said Pécuchet, "what line of demarcation can you lay down between innocent and guilty phrases? The thing that just now is prohibited may be subsequently applauded." And he censured the harshness with which the insurgents had been treated.

Marescot naturally rested his case on the necessity of protecting society, the public safety—the supreme law.

"Pardon me!" said Pécuchet, "the right of a single individual is as much entitled to respect as those of all, and you have nothing to oppose to him but force if he turns your axiom upon yourself."

Instead of replying, Marescot lifted his brows disdainfully. Provided that he continued to draw up legal documents, and to live among his

plates, in his comfortable little home, injustices of every kind might present themselves without affecting him. Business called him away. He excused himself.

His theory of public safety excited their indignation. The Conservatives now talked like Robespierre.

Another matter for astonishment: Cavaignac was flagging; the Garde Mobile was exposing itself to suspicion. Ledru-Rollin had ruined himself even in Vaucorbeil's estimation. The debates on the Constitution interested nobody, and on the th of December all the inhabitants of Chavignolles voted for Bonaparte. The six millions of votes made Pécuchet grow cold with regard to the people, and Bouvard and he proceeded to study the question of universal suffrage.

As it belongs to everybody, it cannot possess intelligence. One ambitious man will always be the leader; the others will follow him like a flock of sheep, the electors not being compelled even to know how to read. This was the reason, in Bouvard's opinion, that there were so many frauds at presidential elections.

"None," replied Bouvard; "I believe rather in the gullibility of the people. Think of all who buy the patent health-restorer, the Dupuytren pomatum, the Châtelaine's water, etc. Those boobies constitute the majority of the electorate, and we submit to their will. Why cannot an income of three thousand francs be made out of rabbits? Because the overcrowding of them is a cause of death. In the same way, through the mere fact of its being a multitude, the germs of stupidity contained in it are developed, and thence result consequences that are incalculable."

"Your scepticism frightens me," said Pécuchet.

At a later period, in the spring, they met M. de Faverges, who apprised them of the expedition to Rome. We should not attack the Italians, but we should require guaranties. Otherwise our influence would be destroyed. Nothing would be more legitimate than this intervention.

Bouvard opened his eyes wide. "On the subject of Poland, you expressed a contrary opinion."

"It is no longer the same thing." It was now a question of the Pope.

And M. de Faverges, when he said, "We wish," "We shall do," "We calculate clearly," represented a group.

Bouvard and Pécuchet were disgusted with the minority quite as much as with the majority. The common people, in short, were just the same as the aristocracy.

The right of intervention appeared dubious to them. They sought for its principles in Calvo, Martens, Vattel; and Bouvard's conclusion was this:

"There may be intervention to restore a prince to the throne, to emancipate a people, or, for the sake of precaution, in view of a public danger. In other cases it is an outrage on the rights of others, an abuse of force, a piece of hypocritical violence."

"And yet," said Pécuchet, "peoples have a solidarity as well as men."

"Perhaps so." And Bouvard sank into a reverie.

The expedition to Rome soon began.

At home, through hatred of revolutionary ideas, the leaders of the Parisian middle class got two printing-offices sacked. The great party of order was formed.

It had for its chiefs in the arrondissement the count, Foureau, Marescot, and the curé. Every day, about four o'clock, they walked from one end of the green to the other, and talked over the events of the day. The principal business was the distribution of pamphlets. The titles did not lack attractiveness: "God will be pleased with it"; "The sharing"; "Let us get out of the mess"; "Where are we going?" The finest things among them were the dialogues in the style of villagers, with oaths and bad French, to elevate the mental faculties of the peasants. By a new law, the hawking of pamphlets would be in the hands of the prefects; and they had just crammed Proudhon into St. Pélagie—gigantic triumph!

The trees of liberty were generally torn down. Chavignolles obeyed orders. Bouvard saw with his own eyes the fragments of his poplar on a wheelbarrow. They helped to warm the gendarmes, and the stump was offered to the curé, who had blessed it. What a mockery!

The schoolmaster did not hide his way of thinking.

Bouvard and Pécuchet congratulated him on it one day as they were passing in front of his door. Next day he presented himself at their residence.

At the end of the week they returned his visit.

The day was declining. The brats had just gone home, and the schoolmaster, in half-sleeves, was sweeping the yard. His wife, with a neckerchief tied round her head, was suckling a baby. A little girl was hiding herself behind her petticoat; a hideous-looking child was playing on the ground at her feet. The water from the washing she had been doing in the kitchen was flowing to the lower end of the house.

"You see," said the schoolmaster, "how the government treats us."

And forthwith he began finding fault with capital as an infamous thing. It was necessary to democratise it, to enfranchise matter.

"I ask for nothing better," said Pécuchet.

At least, they ought to have recognised the right to assistance.

"One more right!" said Bouvard.

No matter! The provisional government had acted in a flabby fashion by not ordaining fraternity.

"Then try to establish it."

As there was no longer daylight, Petit rudely ordered his wife to carry a candle to his study.

The lithograph portraits of the orators of the Left were fastened with pins to the plaster walls. A bookshelf stood above a deal writing-desk. There were a chair, stool, and an old soap-box for persons to sit down upon. He made a show of laughing. But want had laid its traces on his cheeks, and his narrow temples indicated the stubbornness of a ram, an intractable pride. He never would yield.

"Besides, see what sustains me!"

It was a pile of newspapers on a shelf, and in feverish phrases he explained the articles of his faith: disarmament of troops, abolition of the magistracy, equality of salaries, a levelling process by which the golden age was to be brought about under the form of the Republic, with a dictator at its head—a fellow that would carry this out for us briskly!

Then he reached for a bottle of aniseed cordial and three glasses, in order to propose the toast of the hero, the immortal victim, the great Maximilian.

On the threshold appeared the black cassock of the priest. Having saluted those present in an animated fashion, he addressed the schoolmaster, speaking almost in a whisper:

"Our business about St. Joseph, what stage is it at?"

"They have given nothing," replied the schoolmaster.

"That is your fault!"

"I have done what I could."

"Ha! really?"

Bouvard and Pécuchet discreetly rose. Petit made them sit down again, and addressing the curé:

"Is that all?"

The Abbé Jeufroy hesitated. Then, with a smile which tempered his reprimand:

"It is supposed that you are rather negligent about sacred history."

"Oh, sacred history!" interrupted Bouvard.

"What fault have you to find with it, sir?"

"I—none. Only there are perhaps more useful things to be learned than the anecdote of Jonas and the story of the kings of Israel."

"You are free to do as you please," replied the priest drily.

And without regard for the strangers, or on account of their presence:

"The catechism hour is too short."

Petit shrugged his shoulders.

"Mind! You will lose your boarders!"

The ten francs a month for these pupils formed the best part of his remuneration. But the cassock exasperated him.

"So much the worse; take your revenge!"

"A man of my character does not revenge himself," said the priest, without being moved. "Only I would remind you that the law of the fifteenth of March assigns us to the superintendence of primary education."

"Ah! I know that well," cried the schoolmaster. "It is given even to colonels of gendarmes. Why not to the rural guard? That would complete the thing!"

And he sank upon the stool, biting his fingers, repressing his rage, stifled by the feeling of his own powerlessness.

The priest touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"I did not intend to annoy you, my friend. Keep yourself quiet. Be a little reasonable. Here is Easter close at hand; I hope you will show an example by going to communion along with the others."

"That is too much! I—I submit to such absurdities!"

At this blasphemy the curé turned pale, his eyeballs gleamed, his jaw quivered.

"Silence, unhappy man! silence! And it is his wife who looks after the church linen!"

"Well, what then? What has she done to you?"

"She always stays away from mass. Like yourself, for that matter!"

"Oh! a schoolmaster is not sent away for a thing of that kind!"

"He can be removed."

The priest said no more.

He was at the end of the room, in the shadow.

Petit was thinking, with his head resting on his chest.

They would arrive at the other end of France, their last sou eaten up by the journey, and they would again find down there, under different names, the same curé, the same superintendent, the same prefect—all, even to the minister, were like links in a chain dragging him down. He had already had one warning—others would follow. After that?—and in a kind of hallucination he saw himself walking along a high-road, a bag on his back, those whom he loved by his side, and his hand held out towards a post-chaise.

At that moment his wife was seized with a fit of coughing in the kitchen, the new-born infant began to squeal, and the boy was crying.

"Poor children!" said the priest in a softened voice.

The father thereupon broke into sobs:

"Yes, yes! whatever you require!"

"I count upon it," replied the curé.

And, having made the customary bow:

"Well, good evening to you, gentlemen."

The schoolmaster remained with his face in his hands.

He pushed away Bouvard. "No! let me alone. I feel as if I'd like to die. I am an unfortunate man."

The two friends, when they reached their own house, congratulated themselves on their independence. The power of the clergy terrified them.

It was now employed for the purpose of strengthening public order. The Republic was about to disappear.

Three millions of electors found themselves excluded from universal suffrage. The security required from newspapers was raised; the press censorship was re-established. It was even suggested that it should be put in force against the fiction columns. Classical philosophy was considered dangerous. The commercial classes preached the dogma of material interests; and the populace seemed satisfied.

The country-people came back to their old masters.

M. de Faverges, who had estates in Eure, was declared a member of the Legislative Assembly, and his re-election for the general council of Calvados was certain beforehand.

He thought proper to invite the leading personages in the district to a luncheon.

The vestibule in which three servants were waiting to take their overcoats, the billiard-room and the pair of drawing-rooms, the plants in china vases, the bronzes on the mantel-shelves, the gold wands on the panelled walls, the heavy curtains, the wide armchairs—this display of luxury struck them at once as a mark of courtesy towards them; and, when they entered the dining-room, at the sight of the table laden with meats in silver dishes, together with the row of glasses before each plate, the side-dishes here and there, and a salmon in the middle, every face brightened up.

The party numbered seventeen, including two sturdy agriculturists, the sub-prefect of Bayeux and one person from Cherbourg. M. de Faverges begged his guests to excuse the countess, who was absent owing to a headache; and, after some commendations of the pears and grapes, which filled four baskets at the corners, he asked about the great news—the project of a descent on England by Changarnier.

Heurtaux desired it as a soldier, the curé through hatred of the Protestants, and Foureau in the interests of commerce.

"You are giving expression," said Pécuchet, "to the sentiments of the Middle Ages."

"The Middle Ages had their good side," returned Marescot. "For instance, our cathedrals."

"However, sir, the abuses——"

"No matter—the Revolution would not have come."

"Ha! the Revolution—there's the misfortune," said the ecclesiastic with a sigh.

"But everyone contributed towards it, and (excuse me, Monsieur le Comte) the nobles themselves by their alliance with the philosophers."

"What is it you want? Louis XVIII. legalised spoliation. Since that time the parliamentary system is sapping the foundations."

A joint of roast beef made its appearance, and for some minutes nothing was heard save the sounds made by forks and moving jaws, and by the servants crossing the floor with the two words on their lips, which they repeated continually:

"Madeira! Sauterne!"

The conversation was resumed by the gentleman from Cherbourg:

"How were they to stop on the slope of an abyss?"

"Amongst the Athenians," said Marescot—"amongst the Athenians, towards whom we bear certain resemblances, Solon checkmated the democrats by raising the electoral census."

"It would be better," said Hurel, "to suppress the Chamber: every disorder comes from Paris."

"Let us decentralise," said the notary.

"On a large scale," added the count.

In Foureau's opinion, the communal authorities should have absolute control, even to the extent of prohibiting travellers from using their roads, if they thought fit.

And whilst the dishes followed one another—fowl with gravy, lobsters, mushrooms, salads, roast larks—many topics were handled: the best system of taxation, the advantages of the large system of land cultivation, the abolition of the death penalty. The sub-prefect did not forget to cite that charming witticism of a clever man: "Let Messieurs the Assassins begin!"

Bouvard was astonished at the contrast between the surroundings and the remarks that reached his ears; for one would think that the language used should always harmonise with the environment, and that lofty ceilings should be made for great thoughts. Nevertheless, he was flushed at dessert, and saw the fruit-dishes as if through a fog. Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Malaga were amongst the wines sent round. M. de Faverges, who knew the people he had to deal with, made the champagne flow. The guests, touching glasses, drank to his success at the election; and more than three hours elapsed before they passed out into the smoking-room, where coffee was served.

A caricature from *Charivari* was trailing on the floor between some copies of the *Univers*. It represented a citizen the skirts of whose frock-coat allowed a tail to be seen with an eye at the end of it. Marescot explained it amid much laughter.

They swallowed their liqueurs, and the ashes of their cigars fell on the paddings of the furniture.

The abbé, desirous to convince Girbal, began an attack on Voltaire. Coulon fell asleep. M. de Faverges avowed his devotion to Chambord.

"The bees furnish an argument for monarchy."

"But the ants for the Republic." However, the doctor adhered to it no longer.

"You are right," said the sub-prefect; "the form of government matters little."

"With liberty," suggested Pécuchet.

"An honest man has no need of it," replied Foureau. "I make no speeches, for my part. I am not a journalist. And I tell you that France requires to be governed with a rod of iron."

All called for a deliverer. As they were going out, Bouvard and Pécuchet heard M. de Faverges saying to the Abbé Jeufroy:

"We must re-establish obedience. Authority perishes if it be made the subject of discussion. The Divine Right—there is nothing but that!"

"Exactly, Monsieur le Comte."

The pale rays of an October sun were lengthening out behind the woods. A moist wind was blowing, and as they walked over the dead leaves they breathed like men who had just been set free.

All that they had not found the opportunity of saying escaped from them in exclamations:

"What idiots!"

"What baseness!"

"How is it possible to imagine such obstinacy!"

"In the first place, what is the meaning of the Divine Right?"

Dumouchel's friend, that professor who had supplied them with instruction on the subject of æsthetics, replied to their inquiries in a learned letter.

"The theory of Divine Right was formulated in the reign of Charles II. by the Englishman Filmer. Here it is:

"'The Creator gave the first man dominion over the world. It was transmitted to his descendants, and the power of the king emanates from God.'

"'He is His image,' writes Bossuet. 'The paternal empire accustoms us to the domination of one alone. Kings have been made after the model of parents.'

"Locke refuted this doctrine: 'The paternal power is distinguished from the monarchic, every subject having the same right over his children that the monarch has over his own. Royalty exists only through the popular choice; and even the election was recalled at the ceremony of coronation, in which two bishops, pointing towards the king, asked both nobles and peasants whether they accepted him as such.'

"Therefore, authority comes from the people.

"'They have the right to do what they like,' says Helvetius; to 'change their constitution,' says Vattel; to 'revolt against injustice,' according to the contention of Glafey, Hotman, Mably, and others; and St. Thomas Aquinas authorises them to 'deliver themselves from a tyrant.' 'They are even,' says Jurieu, 'dispensed from being right.'"

Astonished at the axiom, they took up Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. Pécuchet went through to the end. Then closing his eyes, and throwing back his head, he made an analysis of it.

"A convention is assumed whereby the individual gives up his liberty.

"The people at the same time undertook to protect him against the inequalities of nature, and made him owner of the things he had in his possession."

"Where is the proof of the contract?"

"Nowhere! And the community does not offer any guaranty. The citizens occupy themselves exclusively with politics. But as callings are necessary, Rousseau is in favour of slavery. 'The sciences have destroyed the human race. The theatre is corrupting, money fatal, and the state ought to impose a religion under the penalty of death.'"

"What!" said they, "here is the pontiff of democracy."

All the champions of reform had copied him; and they procured the *Examen du Socialisme*, by Morant.

The first chapter explained the doctrine of Saint-Simon.

At the top the Father, at the same time Pope and Emperor. Abolition of inheritance; all property movable and immovable forming a social fund, which should be worked on a hierarchical basis. The manufacturers are to govern the public fortune. But there is nothing to be afraid of; they will have as a leader the "one who loves the most."

One thing is lacking: woman. On the advent of woman depends the salvation of the world.

"I do not understand."

"Nor I."

And they turned to Fourierism:

"'All misfortunes come from constraint. Let the attraction be free, and harmony will be established.

"'In our souls are shut up a dozen leading passions: five egoistical, four animistic, and three distributive. The first class have reference to individuals, the second to groups, the last to groups of groups, or series, of which the whole forms a phalanx, a society of eighteen hundred persons dwelling in a palace. Every morning carriages convey the workers into the country, and bring them back in the evening. Standards are carried, festivities are held, cakes are eaten. Every woman, if she desires it, can have three men—the husband, the lover, and the procreator. For celibates, the Bayadère system is established——'"

"That fits me!" said Bouvard. And he lost himself in dreams of the harmonious world.

"'By the restoration of climatures, the earth will become more beautiful; by the crossing of races, human life will become longer. The clouds will be guided as the thunderbolt is now: it will rain at night in the cities so that they will be clean. Ships will cross the polar seas, thawed beneath the Aurora Borealis. For everything is produced by the conjunction of two fluids, male and female, gushing out from the poles, and the northern lights are a symptom of the blending of the planets—a prolific emission.'"

"This is beyond me!" said Pécuchet.

After Saint-Simon and Fourier the problem resolves itself into questions of wages.

Louis Blanc, in the interests of the working class, wishes to abolish external commerce; Lafarelle to tax machinery; another to take off the drink duties, to restore trade wardenships, or to distribute soups.

Proudhon conceives the idea of a uniform tariff, and claims for the state the monopoly of sugar.

"These socialists," said Bouvard, "always call for tyranny."

"Oh, no!"

"Yes, indeed!"

"You are absurd!"

"Well, I am shocked at you!"

They sent for the works of which they had only summaries. Bouvard noted a number of passages, and, pointing them out, said:

"Read for yourself. They offer as examples to us the Essenes, the Moravian Brethren, the Jesuits of Paraguay, and even the government of prisons."

"'Amongst the Icarians breakfast was over in twenty minutes; women were delivered at the hospitals. As for books, it was forbidden to print them without the authorisation of the Republic.'"

"But Cabet is an idiot."

"Here, now, we have from Saint-Simon: 'The publicists should submit their works to a committee of manufacturers.'

"And from Pierre Leroux: 'The law will compel the citizens to listen to an orator.'

"And from Auguste Comte: 'The priests will educate the youth, will exercise supervision over literary works, and will reserve to themselves the power of regulating procreation.'"

These quotations troubled Pécuchet. In the evening, at dinner, he replied:

"I admit that there are absurdities in the works of the inventors of Utopias; nevertheless they deserve our sympathy. The hideousness of the world tormented them, and, in order to make it beautiful, they endured everything. Recall to mind More decapitated, Campanella put seven times to the torture, Buonarotti with a chain round his neck, Saint-Simon dying of want; many others. They might have lived in peace; but no! they marched on their way with their heads towards the sky, like heroes."

"Do you believe," said Bouvard, "that the world will change, thanks to the theories of some particular gentleman?"

"What does it matter?" said Pécuchet; "it is time to cease stagnating in selfishness. Let us look out for the best system."

"Then you expect to find it?"

"Certainly."

"You?"

And, in the fit of laughter with which Bouvard was seized, his shoulders and stomach kept shaking in harmony. Redder than the jams before them, with his napkin under his armpits, he kept repeating, "Ha! ha! ha!" in an irritating fashion.

Pécuchet left the room, slamming the door after him.

Germaine went all over the house to call him, and he was found at the end of his own apartment in an easy chair, without fire or candle, his cap drawn over his eyes. He was not unwell, but had given himself up to his own broodings.

When the quarrel was over they recognised that a foundation was needed for their studies—political economy.

They inquired into supply and demand, capital and rent, importation and prohibition.

One night Pécuchet was awakened by the creaking of a boot in the corridor. The evening before, according to custom, he had himself drawn all the bolts; and he called out to Bouvard, who was fast asleep.

They remained motionless under the coverlets. The noise was not repeated.

The servants, on being questioned, said they had heard nothing.

But, while walking through the garden, they remarked in the middle of a flower-bed, near the gateway, the imprint of a boot-sole, and two of the sticks used as supports for the trees were broken. Evidently some one had climbed over.

It was necessary to give notice of it to the rural guard.

As he was not at the municipal building, Pécuchet thought of going to the grocer's shop.

Who should they see in the back shop, beside Placquevent, in the midst of the topers, but Gorju—Gorju, rigged out like a well-to-do citizen, entertaining the company!

This meeting was taken as a matter of course.

So on they lapsed into a discussion about progress.

Bouvard had no doubt it existed in the domain of science. But in that of literature it was not so manifest; and if comfort increases, the poetic side of life disappears.

Pécuchet, in order to bring home conviction on the point, took a piece of paper: "I trace across here an undulating line. Those who happen to travel over it, whenever it sinks, can no longer see the horizon. It rises again nevertheless, and, in spite of its windings, they reach the top. This is an image of progress."

Madame Bordin entered at this point.

It was the rd of December, . She had the newspaper in her hand.

They read very quickly, side by side, the news of the appeal to the people, the dissolution of the Chamber, and the imprisonment of the deputies.

Pécuchet turned pale. Bouvard gazed at the widow.

"What! have you nothing to say?"

"What do you wish me to do here?" (They had forgotten to offer her a seat.) "I came here simply out of courtesy towards you, and you are scarcely civil to-day."

And out she went, disgusted at their want of politeness.

The astonishing news had struck them dumb. Then they went about the village venting their indignation.

Marescot, whom they found surrounded by a pile of deeds, took a different view. The babbling of the Chamber was at an end, thank Heaven! Henceforth they would have a business policy.

Beljambe knew nothing about the occurrences, and, furthermore, he laughed at them.

In the market-place they stopped Vaucorbeil.

The physician had got over all that. "You are very foolish to bother yourselves."

Foureau passed them by, remarking with a sly air, "The democrats are swamped."

And the captain, with Girbal's arm in his, exclaimed from a distance, "Long live the Emperor!"

But Petit would be sure to understand them, and Bouvard having tapped at a window-pane, the schoolmaster quitted his class.

He thought it a good joke to have Thiers in prison. This would avenge the people.

"Ha! ha! my gentlemen deputies, your turn now!"

The volley of musketry on the boulevards met with the approval of the people of Chavignolles. No mercy for the vanquished, no pity for the victims! Once you revolt, you are a scoundrel!

"Let us be grateful to Providence," said the curé, "and under Providence to Louis Bonaparte. He gathers around him the most distinguished men. The Count de Faverges will be made a senator."

Next day they had a visit from Placquevent.

"These gentlemen" had talked a great deal. He required a promise from them to hold their tongues.

"Do you wish to know my opinion?" said Pécuchet. "Since the middle class is ferocious and the working-men jealous-minded, whilst the people, after all, accept every tyrant, so long as they are allowed to keep

their snouts in the mess, Napoleon has done right. Let him gag them, the rabble, and exterminate them—this will never be too much for their hatred of right, their cowardice, their incapacity, and their blindness."

Bouvard mused: "Hey! progress! what humbug!" He added: "And politics, a nice heap of dirt!"

"It is not a science," returned Pécuchet. "The military art is better: you can tell what will happen—we ought to turn our hands to it."

"Oh, thanks," was Bouvard's answer. "I am disgusted with everything. Better for us to sell our barrack, and go in the name of God's thunder amongst the savages."

"Just as you like."

Mélie was drawing water out in the yard.

The wooden pump had a long lever. In order to make it work, she bent her back, so that her blue stockings could be seen as high as the calf of her legs. Then, with a rapid movement, she raised her right arm, while she turned her head a little to one side; and Pécuchet, as he gazed at her, felt quite a new sensation, a charm, a thrill of intense delight.

CHAPTER VII.

"Unlucky in Love."

And now the days began to be sad. They studied no longer, fearing lest they might be disillusioned. The inhabitants of Chavignolles avoided them. The newspapers they tolerated gave them no information; and so their solitude was unbroken, their time completely unoccupied.

Sometimes they would open a book, and then shut it again—what was the use of it? On other days they would be seized with the idea of cleaning up the garden: at the end of a quarter of an hour they would be fatigued; or they would set out to have a look at the farm, and come back disenchanted; or they tried to interest themselves in household affairs, with the result of making Germaine break out into lamentations. They gave it up.

Bouvard wanted to draw up a catalogue for the museum, and declared their curios stupid.

Pécuchet borrowed Langlois' duck-gun to shoot larks with; the weapon burst at the first shot, and was near killing him.

Then they lived in the midst of that rural solitude so depressing when the grey sky covers in its monotony a heart without hope. The step of a man in wooden shoes is heard as he steals along by the wall, or perchance it is the rain dripping from the roof to the ground. From time to time a dead leaf just grazes one of the windows, then whirls about and flies away. The indistinct echoes of some funeral bell are borne to the ear by the wind. From a corner of the stable comes the lowing of a cow. They yawned in each other's faces, consulted the almanac, looked at the clock, waited for meal-time; and the horizon was ever the same—fields in front, the church to the right, a screen of poplars to the left, their tops swaying incessantly in the hazy atmosphere with a melancholy air.

Habits which they formerly tolerated now gave them annoyance. Pécuchet became quite a bore from his mania for putting his handkerchief on the tablecloth. Bouvard never gave up his pipe, and would keep twisting himself about while he was talking. They started disputes about the dishes, or about the quality of the butter; and while they were chatting face to face each was thinking of different things.

A certain occurrence had upset Pécuchet's mind.

Two days after the riot at Chavignolles, while he was airing his political grievance, he had reached a road covered with tufted elms, and heard behind his back a voice exclaiming, "Stop!"

It was Madame Castillon. She was rushing across from the opposite side without perceiving him.

A man who was walking along in front of her turned round. It was Gorju; and they met some six feet away from Pécuchet, the row of trees separating them from him.

"Is it true," said she, "you are going to fight?"

Pécuchet slipped behind the ditch to listen.

"Well, yes," replied Gorju; "I am going to fight. What has that to do with you?"

"He asks *me* such a question!" cried she, flinging her arms about him. "But, if you are killed, my love! Oh! remain!"

And her blue eyes appealed to him, still more than her words.

"Let me alone. I have to go."

There was an angry sneer on her face.

"The other has permitted it, eh?"

"Don't speak of her."

He raised his fist.

"No, dear; no. I don't say anything." And big tears trickled down her cheeks as far as the frilling of her collarette.

It was midday. The sun shone down upon the fields covered with yellow grain. Far in the distance carriage-wheels softly slipped along the road. There was a torpor in the air—not a bird's cry, not an insect's hum. Gorju cut himself a switch and scraped off the bark.

Madame Castillon did not raise her head again. She, poor woman, was thinking of her vain sacrifices for him, the debts she had paid for him, her future liabilities, and her lost reputation. Instead of complaining, she recalled for him the first days of their love, when she used to go every night to meet him in the barn, so that her husband on one occasion, fancying it was a thief, fired a pistol-shot through the window. The bullet was in the wall still. "From the moment I first knew you, you seemed to me as handsome as a prince. I love your eyes, your voice, your walk, your smell," and in a lower tone she added: "and as for your person, I am fairly crazy about it."

He listened with a smile of gratified vanity.

She clasped him with both hands round the waist, her head bent as if in adoration.

"My dear heart! my dear love! my soul! my life! Come! speak! What is it you want? Is it money? We'll get it. I was in the wrong. I annoyed you. Forgive me; and order clothes from the tailor, drink champagne—enjoy yourself. I will allow everything—everything."

She murmured with a supreme effort, "Even her—as long as you come back to me."

He just touched her lips with his, drawing one arm around her to prevent her from falling; and she kept murmuring, "Dear heart! dear love! how handsome you are! My God! how handsome you are!"

Pécuchet, without moving an inch, his chin just touching the top of the ditch, stared at them in breathless astonishment.

"Come, no swooning," said Gorju. "You'll only have me missing the coach. A glorious bit of devilment is getting ready, and I'm in the swim; so just give me ten sous to stand the conductor a drink."

She took five francs out of her purse. "You will soon give them back to me. Have a little patience. He has been a good while paralysed. Think of that! And, if you liked, we could go to the chapel of Croix-Janval, and there, my love, I would swear before the Blessed Virgin to marry you as soon as he is dead."

"Ah! he'll never die—that husband of yours."

Gorju had turned on his heel. She caught hold of him again, and clinging to his shoulders:

"Let me go with you. I will be your servant. You want some one. But don't go away! don't leave me! Death rather! Kill me!"

She crawled towards him on her knees, trying to seize his hands in order to kiss them. Her cap fell off, then her comb, and her hair got dishevelled. It was turning white around her ears, and, as she looked up at him, sobbing bitterly, with red eyes and swollen lips, he got quite exasperated, and pushed her back.

"Be off, old woman! Good evening."

When she had got up, she tore off the gold cross that hung round her neck, and flinging it at him, cried:

"There, you ruffian!"

Gorju went off, lashing the leaves of the trees with his switch.

Madame Castillon ceased weeping. With fallen jaw and tear-dimmed eyes she stood motionless, petrified with despair; no longer a being, but a thing in ruins.

What he had just chanced upon was for Pécuchet like the discovery of a new world—a world in which there were dazzling splendours, wild blossomings, oceans, tempests, treasures, and abysses of infinite depth. There was something about it that excited terror; but what of that? He

dreamed of love, desired to feel it as she felt it, to inspire it as he inspired it.

However, he execrated Gorju, and could hardly keep from giving information about him at the guard-house.

Pécuchet was mortified by the slim waist, the regular curls, and the smooth beard of Madame Castillon's lover, as well as by the air of a conquering hero which the fellow assumed, while his own hair was pasted to his skull like a soaked wig, his torso wrapped in a greatcoat resembled a bolster, two of his front teeth were out, and his physiognomy had a harsh expression. He thought that Heaven had dealt unkindly with him, and felt that he was one of the disinherited; moreover, his friend no longer cared for him.

Bouvard deserted him every evening. Since his wife was dead, there was nothing to prevent him from taking another, who, by this time, might be coddling him up and looking after his house. And now he was getting too old to think of it.

But Bouvard examined himself in the glass. His cheeks had kept their colour; his hair curled just the same as of yore; not a tooth was loose; and, at the idea that he had still the power to please, he felt a return of youthfulness. Madame Bordin rose in his memory. She had made advances to him, first on the occasion of the burning of the stacks, next at the dinner which they gave, then in the museum at the recital, and lastly, without resenting any want of attention on his part, she had called three Sundays in succession. He paid her a return visit, and repeated it, making up his mind to woo and win her.

Since the day when Pécuchet had watched the little servant-maid drawing water, he had frequently talked to her, and whether she was sweeping the corridor or spreading out the linen, or taking up the saucepans, he could never grow tired of looking at her—surprised himself at his emotions, as in the days of adolescence. He had fevers and languors on account of her, and he was stung by the picture left in his memory of Madame Castillon straining Gorju to her breast.

He was about to clasp her in his arms

He questioned Bouvard as to the way libertines set about seducing women.

"They make them presents; they bring them to restaurants for supper."

"Very good. But after that?"

"Some of them pretend to faint, in order that you may carry them over to a sofa; others let their handkerchiefs fall on the ground. The best of them plainly make an appointment with you." And Bouvard launched forth into descriptions which inflamed Pécuchet's imagination, like engravings of voluptuous scenes.

"The first rule is not to believe what they say. I have known those who, under the appearance of saints, were regular Messalinas. Above all, you must be bold."

But boldness cannot be had to order.

From day to day Pécuchet put off his determination, and besides he was intimidated by the presence of Germaine.

Hoping that she would ask to have her wages paid, he exacted additional work from her, took notice every time she got tipsy, referred in a loud voice to her want of cleanliness, her quarrelsomeness, and did it all so effectively that she had to go.

Then Pécuchet was free! With what impatience he waited for Bouvard to go out! What a throbbing of the heart he felt as soon as the door closed!

Mélie was working at a round table near the window by the light of a candle; from time to time she broke the threads with her teeth, then she half-closed her eyes while adjusting it in the slit of the needle. At first he asked her what kind of men she liked. Was it, for instance, Bouvard's style?

"Oh, no." She preferred thin men.

He ventured to ask her if she ever had had any lovers.

"Never."

Then, drawing closer to her, he surveyed her piquant nose, her small mouth, her charmingly-rounded figure. He paid her some compliments, and exhorted her to prudence.

In bending over her he got a glimpse, under her corsage, of her white skin, from which emanated a warm odour that made his cheeks tingle. One evening he touched with his lips the wanton hairs at the back of her neck, and he felt shaken even to the marrow of his bones. Another time

he kissed her on the chin, and had to restrain himself from putting his teeth in her flesh, so savoury was it. She returned his kiss. The apartment whirled round; he no longer saw anything.

He made her a present of a pair of lady's boots, and often treated her to a glass of aniseed cordial.

To save her trouble he rose early, chopped up the wood, lighted the fire, and was so attentive as to clean Bouvard's shoes.

Mélie did not faint or let her handkerchief fall, and Pécuchet did not know what to do, his passion increasing through the fear of satisfying it.

Bouvard was assiduously paying his addresses to Madame Bordin. She used to receive him rather cramped in her gown of shot silk, which creaked like a horse's harness, all the while fingering her long gold chain to keep herself in countenance.

Their conversations turned on the people of Chavignolles or on "the dear departed," who had been an usher at Livarot.

Then she inquired about Bouvard's past, curious to know something of his "youthful freaks," the way in which he had fallen heir to his fortune, and the interests by which he was bound to Pécuchet.

He admired the appearance of her house, and when he came to dinner there was struck by the neatness with which it was served and the excellent fare placed on the table. A succession of dishes of the most savoury description, which intermingled at regular intervals with a bottle of old Pomard, brought them to the dessert, at which they remained a long time sipping their coffee; and, with dilating nostrils, Madame Bordin dipped into her saucer her thick lip, lightly shaded with a black down.

One day she appeared in a low dress. Her shoulders fascinated Bouvard. As he sat in a little chair before her, he began to pass his hands along her arms. The widow seemed offended. He did not repeat this attention, but he pictured to himself those ample curves, so marvellously smooth and fine.

Any evening when he felt dissatisfied with Mélie's cooking, it gave him pleasure to enter Madame Bordin's drawing-room. It was there he should have lived.

The globe of the lamp, covered with a red shade, shed a tranquil light. She was seated close to the fire, and his foot touched the hem of her skirt.

After a few opening words the conversation flagged.

However, she kept gazing at him, with half-closed lids, in a languid fashion, but unbending withal.

Bouvard could not stand it any longer, and, sinking on his knees to the floor, he stammered:

"I love you! Marry me!"

Madame Bordin drew a strong breath; then, with an ingenuous air, said he was jesting; no doubt he was trying to have a laugh at her expense—it was not fair. This declaration stunned her.

Bouvard returned that she did not require anyone's consent. "What's to hinder you? Is it the trousseau? Our linen has the same mark, a B—we'll unite our capital letters!"

The idea caught her fancy. But a more important matter prevented her from arriving at a decision before the end of the month. And Bouvard groaned.

She had the politeness to accompany him to the gate, escorted by Marianne, who carried a lantern.

The two friends kept their love affairs hidden from each other.

Pécuchet counted on always cloaking his intrigue with the servant-maid. If Bouvard made any opposition to it, he could carry her off to other places, even though it were to Algeria, where living is not so dear. But he rarely indulged in such speculations, full as he was of his passion, without thinking of the consequences.

Bouvard conceived the idea of converting the museum into the bridal chamber, unless Pécuchet objected, in which case he might take up his residence at his wife's house.

One afternoon in the following week—it was in her garden; the buds were just opening, and between the clouds there were great blue spaces—she stopped to gather some violets, and said as she offered them to him:

"Salute Madame Bouvard!"

"What! Is it true?"

"Perfectly true."

He was about to clasp her in his arms. She kept him back. "What a man!" Then, growing serious, she warned him that she would shortly be asking him for a favour.

"'Tis granted."

They fixed the following Thursday for the formality of signing the marriage contract.

Nobody should know anything about it up to the last moment.

"Agreed."

And off he went, looking up towards the sky, nimble as a roebuck.

Pécuchet on the morning of the same day said in his own mind that he would die if he did not obtain the favours of his little maid, and he followed her into the cellar, hoping the darkness would give him courage.

She tried to go away several times, but he detained her in order to count the bottles, to choose laths, or to look into the bottoms of casks—and this occupied a considerable time.

She stood facing him under the light that penetrated through an air-hole, with her eyes cast down, and the corner of her mouth slightly raised.

"Do you love me?" said Pécuchet abruptly.

"Yes, I do love you."

"Well, then prove it to me."

And throwing his left arm around her, he embraced her with ardour.

"You're going to do me some harm."

"No, my little angel. Don't be afraid."

"If Monsieur Bouvard——"

"I'll tell him nothing. Make your mind easy."

There was a heap of faggots behind them. She sank upon them, and hid her face under one arm;—and another man would have understood that she was no novice.

Bouvard arrived soon for dinner.

The meal passed in silence, each of them being afraid of betraying himself, while Mélie attended them with her usual impassiveness.

Pécuchet turned away his eyes to avoid hers; and Bouvard, his gaze resting on the walls, pondered meanwhile on his projected improvements.

Eight days after he came back in a towering rage.

"The damned traitress!"

"Who, pray?"

"Madame Bordin."

And he related how he had been so infatuated as to offer to make her his wife, but all had come to an end a quarter of an hour since at Marescot's office. She wished to have for her marriage portion the Ecalles meadow, which he could not dispose of, having partly retained it, like the farm, with the money of another person.

"Exactly," said Pécuchet.

"I had had the folly to promise her any favour she asked—and this was what she was after! I attribute her obstinacy to this; for if she loved me she would have given way to me."

The widow, on the contrary, had attacked him in insulting language, and referred disparagingly to his physique, his big paunch.

"My paunch! Just imagine for a moment!"

Meanwhile Pécuchet had risen several times, and seemed to be in pain.

Bouvard asked him what was the matter, and thereupon Pécuchet, having first taken the precaution to shut the door, explained in a hesitating manner that he was affected with a certain disease.

"What! You?"

"I—myself."

"Oh, my poor fellow! And who is the cause of this?"

Pécuchet became redder than before, and said in a still lower tone:

"It can be only Mélie."

Bouvard remained stupefied.

The first thing to do was to send the young woman away.

She protested with an air of candour.

Pécuchet's case was, however, serious; but he was ashamed to consult a physician.

Bouvard thought of applying to Barberou.

They gave him particulars about the matter, in order that he might communicate with a doctor who would deal with the case by correspondence.

Barberou set to work with zeal, believing it was Bouvard's own case, and calling him an old dotard, even though he congratulated him about it.

"At my age!" said Pécuchet. "Is it not a melancholy thing? But why did she do this?"

"You pleased her."

"She ought to have given me warning."

"Does passion reason?" And Bouvard renewed his complaints about Madame Bordin.

Often had he surprised her before the Ecalles, in Marescot's company, having a gossip with Germaine. So many manœuvres for a little bit of land!

"She is avaricious! That's the explanation."

So they ruminated over their disappointments by the fireside in the breakfast parlour, Pécuchet swallowing his medicines and Bouvard puffing at his pipe; and they began a discussion about women.

"Strange want!—or is it a want?" "They drive men to crime—to heroism as well as to brutishness." "Hell under a petticoat," "paradise in a kiss," "the turtle's warbling," "the serpent's windings," "the cat's claws," "the sea's treachery," "the moon's changeableness." They repeated all the commonplaces that have been uttered about the sex.

It was the desire for women that had suspended their friendship. A feeling of remorse took possession of them. "No more women. Is not that so? Let us live without them!" And they embraced each other tenderly.

There should be a reaction; and Bouvard, when Pécuchet was better, considered that a course of hydropathic treatment would be beneficial.

Germaine, who had come back since the other servant's departure, carried the bathing-tub each morning into the corridor.

The two worthies, naked as savages, poured over themselves big buckets of water; they then rushed back to their rooms. They were seen through the garden fence, and people were scandalised.

CHAPTER VIII.

New Diversions.

Satisfied with their regimen, they desired to improve their constitutions by gymnastics; and taking up the *Manual of Amoros*, they went through its atlas. All those young lads squatting, lying back, standing, bending their legs, lifting weights, riding on beams, climbing ladders, cutting capers on trapezes—such a display of strength and agility excited their envy.

However, they were saddened by the splendour of the gymnasium described in the preface; for they would never be able to get a vestibule for the equipages, a hippodrome for the races, a sweep of water for the swimming, or a "mountain of glory"—an artificial hillock over one hundred feet in height.

A wooden vaulting-horse with the stuffing would have been expensive: they abandoned the idea. The linden tree, thrown down in the garden, might have been used as a horizontal pole; and, when they were skilful enough to go over it from one end to the other, in order to have a vertical one, they set up a beam of counter-espaliers. Pécuchet clambered to the top; Bouvard slipped off, always fell back, finally gave it up.

The "orthosomatic sticks" pleased him better; that is to say, two broomsticks bound by two cords, the first of which passes under the armpits, and the second over the wrists; and for hours he would remain in this apparatus, with his chin raised, his chest extended, and his elbows close to his sides.

For want of dumbbells, the wheelwright turned out four pieces of ash resembling sugar-loaves with necks of bottles at the ends. These should be carried to the right and to the left, to the front and to the back; but being too heavy they fell out of their hands, at the risk of bruising their legs. No matter! They set their hearts on Persian clubs, and even fearing

lest they might break, they rubbed them every evening with wax and a piece of cloth.

Then they looked out for ditches. When they found one suitable for their purpose, they rested a long pole in the centre, sprang forward on the left foot, reached the opposite side, and then repeated the performance. The country being flat, they could be seen at a distance; and the villagers asked one another what were these extraordinary things skipping towards the horizon.

When autumn arrived they went in for chamber gymnastics, which completely bored them. Why had they not the indoor apparatus or post-armchair invented in Louis XIV.'s time by the Abbé of St. Pierre? How was it made? Where could they get the information?

Dumouchel did not deign to answer their letter on the subject.

Then they erected in the bakehouse a brachial weighing-machine. Over two pulleys attached to the ceiling a rope was passed, holding a crossbeam at each end. As soon as they had caught hold of it one pushed against the ground with his toes, while the other lowered his arms to a level with the floor; the first by his weight would draw towards him the second, who, slackening his rope a little, would ascend in his turn. In less than five minutes their limbs were dripping with perspiration.

In order to follow the prescriptions of the Manual, they tried to make themselves ambidextrous, even to the extent of depriving themselves for a time of the use of their right hands. They did more: Amoros points out certain snatches of verse which ought to be sung during the manœuvres, and Bouvard and Pécuchet, as they proceeded, kept repeating the hymn No. : "A king, a just king is a blessing on earth."

When they beat their breast-bones: "Friends, the crown and the glory," etc.

At the various steps of the race:

"Let us catch the beast that cowers! Soon the swift stag shall be ours! Yes! the race shall soon be won, Come, run! come, run! come, run!"

And, panting more than hounds, they cheered each other on with the sounds of their voices.

One side of gymnastics excited their enthusiasm—its employment as a means of saving life. But they would have required children in order to

learn how to carry them in sacks, and they begged the schoolmaster to furnish them with some. Petit objected that their families would be annoyed at it. They fell back on the succour of the wounded. One pretended to have swooned: the other rolled him away in a wheelbarrow with the utmost precaution.

As for military escalades, the author extols the ladder of Bois-Rosé, so called from the captain who surprised Fécamp in former days by climbing up the cliff.

In accordance with the engraving in the book, they trimmed a rope with little sticks and fixed it under the cart-shed. As soon as the first stick is bestridden and the third grasped, the limbs are thrown out in order that the second, which a moment before was against the chest, might be directly under the thighs. The climber then springs up and grasps the fourth, and so goes on.

In spite of prodigious strainings of the hips, they found it impossible to reach the second step. Perhaps there is less trouble in hanging on to stones with your hands, just as Bonaparte's soldiers did at the attack of Fort Chambray? and to make one capable of such an action, Amoros has a tower in his establishment.

The wall in ruins might do as a substitute for it. They attempted the assault with it. But Bouvard, having withdrawn his foot too quickly from a hole, got frightened, and was seized with dizziness.

Pécuchet blamed their method for it. They had neglected that which relates to the phalanxes, so that they should go back to first principles.

His exhortations were fruitless; and then, in his pride and presumption, he went in for stilts.

Nature seemed to have destined him for them, for he immediately made use of the great model with flat boards four feet from the ground, and, balanced thereon, he stalked over the garden like a gigantic stork taking exercise.

Bouvard, at the window, saw him stagger and then flop down all of a heap over the kidney-beans, whose props, giving way as he descended, broke his fall.

He was picked up covered with mould, his nostrils bleeding—livid; and he fancied that he had strained himself.

Decidedly, gymnastics did not agree with men of their age. They abandoned them, did not venture to move about any longer for fear of accidents, and they remained the whole day sitting in the museum dreaming of other occupations.

This change of habits had an influence on Bouvard's health. He became very heavy, puffed like a whale after his meals, tried to make himself thin, ate less, and began to grow weak.

Pécuchet, in like manner, felt himself "undermined," had itchings in his skin and lumps in his throat.

"This won't do," said they; "this won't do."

Bouvard thought of going to select at the inn some bottles of Spanish wine in order to put his bodily machinery in order.

As he was going out, Marescot's clerk and three men brought from Beljambe a large walnut table. "Monsieur" was much obliged to him for it. It had been conveyed in perfect order.

Bouvard in this way learned about the new fashion of table-turning. He joked about it with the clerk.

However, all over Europe, America, Australia and the Indies, millions of mortals passed their lives in making tables turn; and they discovered the way to make prophets of canaries, to give concerts without instruments, and to correspond by means of snails. The press, seriously offering these impostures to the public, increased its credulity.

The spirit-rappers had alighted at the château of Faverges, and thence had spread through the village; and the notary questioned them particularly.

Shocked at Bouvard's scepticism, he invited the two friends to an evening party at table-turning.

Was this a trap? Madame Bordin was to be there. Pécuchet went alone.

There were present as spectators the mayor, the tax-collector, the captain, other residents and their wives, Madame Vaucorbeil, Madame Bordin, of course, besides Mademoiselle Laverrière, Madame Marescot's former schoolmistress, a rather squint-eyed lady with her hair falling over her shoulders in the corkscrew fashion of . In an armchair

sat a cousin from Paris, attired in a blue coat and wearing an air of insolence.

The two bronze lamps, the whatnot containing a number of curiosities, ballads embellished with vignettes on the piano, and small water-colours in huge frames, had always excited astonishment in Chavignolles. But this evening all eyes were directed towards the mahogany table. They would test it by and by, and it had the importance of things which contain a mystery. A dozen guests took their places around it with outstretched hands and their little fingers touching one another. Only the ticking of the clock could be heard. The faces indicated profound attention. At the end of ten minutes several complained of tinglings in the arms.

Pécuchet was incommoded.

"You are pushing!" said the captain to Foureau.

"Not at all."

"Yes, you are!"

"Ah! sir."

The notary made them keep quiet.

By dint of straining their ears they thought they could distinguish cracklings of wood.

An illusion! Nothing had budged.

The other day when the Aubert and Lorraine families had come from Lisieux and they had expressly borrowed Beljambe's table for the occasion, everything had gone on so well. But this to-day exhibited a certain obstinacy. Why?

The carpet undoubtedly counteracted it, and they changed to the dining-room.

The round table, which was on rollers, glided towards the right-hand side. The operators, without displacing their fingers, followed its movements, and of its own accord it made two turns. They were astounded.

Then M. Alfred articulated in a loud voice:

"Spirit, how do you find my cousin?"

The table, slowly oscillating, struck nine raps. According to a slip of paper, in which the number of raps were translated by letters, this meant "Charming."

A number of voices exclaimed "Bravo!"

Then Marescot, to tease Madame Bordin, called on the spirit to declare her exact age.

The foot of the table came down with five taps.

"What? five years!" cried Girbal.

"The tens don't count," replied Foureau.

The widow smiled, though she was inwardly annoyed.

The replies to the other questions were missing, so complicated was the alphabet.

Much better was the plane table—an expeditious medium of which Mademoiselle Laverrière had made use for the purpose of noting down in an album the direct communications of Louis XII., Clémence Isaure, Franklin, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and others. These mechanical contrivances are sold in the Rue d'Aumale. M. Alfred promised one of them; then addressing the schoolmistress: "But for a quarter of an hour we should have a little music; don't you think so? A mazurka!"

Two metal chords vibrated. He took his cousin by the waist, disappeared with her, and came back again.

The sweep of her dress, which just brushed the doors as they passed, cooled their faces. She flung back her head; he curved his arms. The gracefulness of the one, the playful air of the other, excited general admiration; and, without waiting for the rout cakes, Pécuchet took himself off, amazed at the evening's exhibition.

In vain did he repeat: "But I have seen it! I have seen it!"

Bouvard denied the facts, but nevertheless consented to make an experiment himself.

For a fortnight they spent every afternoon facing each other, with their hands over a table, then over a hat, over a basket, and over plates. All these remained motionless.

The phenomenon of table-turning is none the less certain. The common herd attribute it to spirits; Faraday to prolonged nervous action;

Chevreuil to unconscious efforts; or perhaps, as Segouin admits, there is evolved from the assembly of persons an impulse, a magnetic current.

This hypothesis made Pécuchet reflect. He took into his library the *Magnetiser's Guide*, by Montacabère, read it over attentively, and initiated Bouvard in the theory: All animated bodies receive and communicate the influence of the stars—a property analogous to the virtue of the loadstone. By directing this force we may cure the sick; there is the principle. Science has developed since Mesmer; but it is always an important thing to pour out the fluid and to make passes, which, in the first place, must have the effect of inducing sleep.

"Well! send me to sleep," said Bouvard.

"Impossible!" replied Pécuchet: "in order to be subject to the magnetic action, and to transmit it, faith is indispensable."

Then, gazing at Bouvard: "Ah! what a pity!"

"How?"

"Yes, if you wished, with a little practice, there would not be a magnetiser anywhere like you."

For he possessed everything that was needed: easiness of access, a robust constitution, and a solid mind.

The discovery just made of such a faculty in himself was flattering to Bouvard. He took a plunge into Montacabère's book on the sly.

Then, as Germaine used to feel buzzings in her ears that deafened her, he said to her one evening in a careless tone:

"Suppose we try magnetism?"

She did not make any objection to it. He sat down in front of her, took her two thumbs in his hands, and looked fixedly at her, as if he had not done anything else all his life.

The old dame, with her feet on a footwarmer, began by bending her neck; her eyes closed, and quite gently she began to snore. At the end of an hour, during which they had been staring at her, Pécuchet said in a low tone:

"What do you feel?"

She awoke.

Later, no doubt, would come lucidity.

This success emboldened them, and, resuming with self-confidence, the practice of medicine, they nursed Chamberlan, the beadle, for pains in his ribs; Migraine the mason, who had a nervous affection of the stomach; Mère Varin, whose encephaloid under the collar-bone required, in order to nourish her, plasters of meat; a gouty patient, Père Lemoine, who used to crawl by the side of taverns; a consumptive; a person afflicted with hemiplegia, and many others. They also treated corns and chilblains.

After an investigation into the disease, they cast questioning glances at each other to determine what passes to use, whether the currents should be large or small, ascending or descending, longitudinal, transversal, bidigital, tridigital, or even quindigital.

When the one had had too much of it, the other replaced him. Then, when they had come back to their own house, they noted down their observation in their diary of treatment.

Their suave manners captivated everyone. However, Bouvard was liked better, and his reputation spread as far as Falaise, where he had cured La Barbée, the daughter of Père Barbée, a retired captain of long standing.

She had felt something like a nail in the back of her head, spoke in a hoarse voice, often remained several days without eating, and then would devour plaster or coal. Her nervous crises, beginning with sobs, ended in floods of tears; and every kind of remedy, from diet-drinks to moxas, had been employed, so that, through sheer weariness, she accepted Bouvard's offer to cure her.

When he had dismissed the servant-maid and bolted the door, he began rubbing her abdomen, while leaning over the seat of the ovaries. A sense of relief manifested itself by sighs and yawns. He placed his finger between her eyebrows and the top of her nose: all at once she became inert. If one lifted her arms, they fell down again. Her head remained in whatever attitude he wished, and her lids, half closed, vibrating with a spasmodic movement, allowed her eyeballs to be seen rolling slowly about; they riveted themselves on the corners convulsively.

Bouvard asked her if she were in pain. She replied that she was not. Then he inquired what she felt now. She indicated the inside of her body.

"What do you see there?"

"A worm."

"What is necessary in order to kill it?"

She wrinkled her brow. "I am looking for—I am not able! I am not able!"

At the second sitting she prescribed for herself nettle-broth; at the third, catnip. The crises became mitigated, then disappeared. It was truly a miracle. The nasal addigitation did not succeed with the others, and, in order to bring on somnambulism, they projected the construction of a mesmeric tub. Pécuchet already had even collected the filings and cleaned a score of bottles, when a scruple made him hesitate.

Amongst the patients there would be persons of the other sex.

"And what are we to do if this should give rise to an outburst of erotic mania?"

This would not have proved any impediment to Bouvard; but for fear of impostures and attempts to extort hush-money, it was better to put aside the project. They contented themselves with a collection of musical glasses, which they carried about with them to the different houses, so as to delight the children.

One day, when Migraine was worse, they had recourse to the musical glasses. The crystalline sounds exasperated him; but Deleuze enjoins that one should not be frightened by complaints; and so they went on with the music.

"Enough! enough!" he cried.

"A little patience!" Bouvard kept repeating.

Pécuchet tapped more quickly on the glass plates, and the instrument was vibrating in the midst of the poor man's cries when the doctor appeared, attracted by the hubbub.

"What! you again?" he exclaimed, enraged at finding them always with his patients.

They explained their magnetic method of curing. Then he declaimed against magnetism—"a heap of juggleries, whose effects came only from the imagination."

However, animals are magnetised. Montacabère so states, and M. Fontaine succeeded in magnetising a lion. They had not a lion, but chance had offered them another animal.

For on the following day a ploughboy came to inform them that they were wanted up at the farm for a cow in a hopeless condition.

They hurried thither. The apple trees were in bloom, and the herbage in the farmyard was steaming under the rays of the rising sun.

At the side of a pond, half covered with a cloth, a cow was lowing, while she shivered under the pails of water that were being emptied over her body, and, enormously swollen, she looked like a hippopotamus.

Without doubt she had got "venom" while grazing amid the clover. Père Gouy and his wife were afflicted because the veterinary surgeon was not able to come, and the wheelwright who had a charm against swelling did not choose to put himself out of his way; but "these gentlemen, whose library was famous, must know the secret."

Having tucked up their sleeves, they placed themselves one in front of the horns, the other at the rump, and, with great internal efforts and frantic gesticulations, they spread wide their fingers in order to scatter streams of fluid over the animal, while the farmer, his wife, their son, and the neighbours regarded them almost with terror.

The rumblings which were heard in the cow's belly caused borborygms in the interior of her bowels. She emitted wind.

Pécuchet thereupon said: "This is an opening door for hope—an outlet, perhaps."

The outlet produced its effect: the hope gushed forth in a bundle of yellow stuff, bursting with the force of a shell. The hide got loose; the cow got rid of her swelling. An hour later there was no longer any sign of it.

This was certainly not the result of imagination. Therefore the fluid contained some special virtue. It lets itself be shut up in the objects to whom it is given without being impaired. Such an expedient saves displacements. They adopted it; and they sent their clients magnetised

tokens, magnetised handkerchiefs, magnetised water, and magnetised bread.

Then, continuing their studies, they abandoned the passes for the system of Puységur, which replaces the magnetiser by means of an old tree, about the trunk of which a cord is rolled.

A pear tree in their fruit garden seemed made expressly for the purpose. They prepared it by vigorously encircling it with many pressures. A bench was placed underneath. Their clients sat in a row, and the results obtained there were so marvellous that, in order to get the better of Vaucorbeil, they invited him to a *séance* along with the leading personages of the locality.

Not one failed to attend. Germaine received them in the breakfast-room, making excuses on behalf of her masters, who would join them presently.

From time to time they heard the bell ringing. It was the patients whom she was bringing in by another way. The guests nudged one another, drawing attention to the windows covered with dust, the stains on the panels, the frayed pictures; and the garden, too, was in a wretched state. Dead wood everywhere! The orchard was barricaded with two sticks thrust into a gap in the wall.

Pécuchet made his appearance. "At your service, gentlemen."

And they saw at the end of the garden, under the Edouïn pear tree, a number of persons seated.

Chamberlan, clean-shaven like a priest, in a short cassock of lasting, with a leathern cap, gave himself up to the shivering sensations engendered by the pains in his ribs. Migraine, whose stomach was always tormenting him, made wry faces close beside him. Mère Varin, to hide her tumour, wore a shawl with many folds. Père Lemoine, his feet stockingless in his old shoes, had his crutches under his knees; and La Barbée, who wore her Sunday clothes, looked exceedingly pale.

At the opposite side of the tree were other persons. A woman with an albino type of countenance was sponging the suppurating glands of her neck; a little girl's face half disappeared under her blue glasses; an old man, whose spine was deformed by a contraction, with his involuntary movements knocked against Marcel, a sort of idiot clad in a tattered

blouse and a patched pair of trousers. His hare-lip, badly stitched, allowed his incisors to be seen, and his jaw, which was swollen by an enormous inflammation, was muffled up in linen.

They were all holding in their hands pieces of twine that hung down from the tree. The birds were singing, and the air was impregnated with the refreshing smell of grass. The sun played with the branches, and the ground was smooth as moss.

Meanwhile, instead of going to sleep, the subjects of the experiment were straining their eyes.

"Up to the present," said Foureau, "it is not funny. Begin. I am going away for a minute."

And he came back smoking an Abd-el-Kader, the last that was left from the gate with the pipes.

Pécuchet recalled to mind an admirable method of magnetising. He put into his mouth the noses of all the patients in succession, and inhaled their breath, in order to attract the electricity to himself; and at the same time Bouvard clasped the tree, with the object of augmenting the fluid.

The mason interrupted his hiccoughs; the beadle was agitated; the man with the contraction moved no more. It was possible now to approach them, and make them submit to all the tests.

The doctor, with his lancet, pricked Chamberlan's ear, which trembled a little. Sensibility in the case of the others was manifest. The gouty man uttered a cry. As for La Barbée, she smiled, as if in a dream, and a stream of blood trickled under her jaw.

Foureau, in order to make the experiment himself, would fain have seized the lancet, but the doctor having refused, he vigorously pinched the invalid.

The captain tickled her nostrils with a feather; the tax-collector plunged a pin under her skin.

"Let her alone now," said Vaucorbeil; "it is nothing astonishing, after all. Simply a hysterical female! The devil will have his pains for nothing."

"That one there," said Pécuchet, pointing towards Victoire, the scrofulous woman, "is a physician. She recognises diseases, and indicates the remedies."

Langlois burned to consult her about his catarrh; but Coulon, more courageous, asked her for something for his rheumatism.

Pécuchet placed his right hand in Victoire's left, and, with her lids closed uninterruptedly, her cheeks a little red, her lips quivering, the somnambulist, after some rambling utterances, ordered *valum becum*.

She had assisted in an apothecary's shop at Bayeux. Vaucorbeil drew the inference that what she wanted to say was *album Græcum* a term which is to be found in pharmacy.

Then they accosted Père Lemoine, who, according to Bouvard, could see objects through opaque bodies. He was an ex-schoolmaster, who had sunk into debauchery. White hairs were scattered about his face, and, with his back against the tree and his palms open, he was sleeping in the broad sunlight in a majestic fashion.

The physician drew over his eyes a double neckcloth; and Bouvard, extending a newspaper towards him, said imperiously:

"Read!"

He lowered his brow, moved the muscles of his face, then threw back his head, and ended by spelling out:

"Cons-ti-tu-tion-al."

But with skill the muffler could be slipped off!

These denials by the physician roused Pécuchet's indignation. He even ventured to pretend that La Barbée could describe what was actually taking place in his own house.

"May be so," returned the doctor.

Then, taking out his watch:

"What is my wife occupying herself with?"

For a long time La Barbée hesitated; then with a sullen air:

"Hey! what? I am there! She is sewing ribbons on a straw hat."

Vaucorbeil snatched a leaf from his note-book and wrote a few lines on it, which Marescot's clerk hastened to deliver.

The *séance* was over. The patients went away.

Bouvard and Pécuchet, on the whole, had not succeeded. Was this due to the temperature, or to the smell of tobacco, or to the Abbé Jeufroy's umbrella, which had a lining of copper, a metal unfavourable to the emission of the fluid?

Vaucorbeil shrugged his shoulders. However, he could not deny the honesty of MM. Deleuze, Bertrand, Morin, Jules Cloquet. Now these masters lay down that somnambulists have predicted events, and submitted without pain to cruel operations.

The abbé related stories more astonishing. A missionary had seen Brahmins rushing, heads down, through a street; the Grand Lama of Thibet rips open his bowels in order to deliver oracles.

"Are you joking?" said the physician.

"By no means."

"Come, now, what tomfoolery that is!"

And the question being dropped, each of them furnished an anecdote.

"As for me," said the grocer, "I had a dog who was always sick when the month began on a Friday."

"We were fourteen children," observed the justice of the peace. "I was born on the th, my marriage took place on the th, and my saint's-day falls on the th. Explain this to me."

Beljambe had often reckoned in a dream the number of travellers he would have next day at his inn; and Petit told about the supper of Cazotte.

The curé then made this reflection:

"Why do we not see into it quite easily?"

"The demons—is that what you say?" asked Vaucorbeil.

Instead of again opening his lips, the abbé nodded his head.

Marescot spoke of the Pythia of Delphi.

"Beyond all question, miasmas."

"Oh! miasmas now!"

"As for me, I admit the existence of a fluid," remarked Bouvard.

"Nervoso-siderial," added Pécuchet.

"But prove it, show it, this fluid of yours! Besides, fluids are out of fashion. Listen to me."

Vaucorbeil moved further up to get into the shade. The others followed him.

"If you say to a child, 'I am a wolf; I am going to eat you,' he imagines that you are a wolf, and he is frightened. Therefore, this is a vision conjured up by words. In the same way the somnambulist accepts any

fancies that you desire him to accept. He recollects instead of imagining, and has merely sensations when he believes that he is thinking. In this manner it is possible for crimes to be suggested, and virtuous people may see themselves ferocious beasts, and involuntarily become cannibals."

Glances were cast towards Bouvard and Pécuchet. Their scientific pursuits were fraught with dangers to society.

Marescot's clerk reappeared in the garden flourishing a letter from Madame Vaucorbeil.

The doctor tore it open, turned pale, and finally read these words:

"*I am sewing ribbons on a straw hat.*"

Amazement prevented them from bursting into a laugh.

"A mere coincidence, deuce take it! It proves nothing."

And as the two magnetisers wore looks of triumph, he turned round at the door to say to them:

"Don't go further. These are risky amusements."

The curé, while leading away his beadle, reproved them sternly:

"Are you mad? Without my permission! Practices forbidden by the Church!"

They had all just taken their leave; Bouvard and Pécuchet were talking to the schoolmaster on the hillock, when Marcel rushed from the orchard, the bandage of his chin undone, and stuttered:

"Cured! cured! good gentlemen."

"All right! enough! Let us alone."

Petit, a man of advanced ideas, thought the doctor's explanation commonplace and unenlightened. Science is a monopoly in the hands of the rich. She excludes the people. To the old-fashioned analysis of the Middle Ages it is time that a large and ready-witted synthesis should succeed. Truth should be arrived at through the heart. And, declaring himself a spiritualist, he pointed out several works, no doubt imperfect, but the heralds of a new dawn.

They sent for them.

Spiritualism lays down as a dogma the fated amelioration of our species. Earth will one day become Heaven. And this is the reason why the doctrine fascinated the schoolmaster. Without being Catholic, it was

known to St. Augustine and St. Louis. Allan Kardec even has published some fragments dictated by them which are in accordance with contemporary opinions. It is practical as well as benevolent, and reveals to us, like the telescope, the supernal worlds.

Spirits, after death and in a state of ecstasy, are transported thither. But sometimes they descend upon our globe, where they make furniture creak, mingle in our amusements, taste the beauties of Nature, and the pleasures of the arts.

Nevertheless, there are amongst us many who possess an astral trunk—that is to say, behind the ear a long tube which ascends from the hair to the planets, and permits us to converse with the spirits of Saturn. Intangible things are not less real, and from the earth to the stars, from the stars to the earth, a see-saw motion takes place, a transmission, a continual change of place.

Then Pécuchet's heart swelled with extravagant aspirations, and when night had come Bouvard surprised him at the window contemplating those luminous spaces which are peopled with spirits.

Swedenborg made rapid journeys to them. For in less than a year he explored Venus, Mars, Saturn, and, twenty-three times, Jupiter. Moreover, he saw Jesus Christ in London; he saw St. Paul; he saw St. John; he saw Moses; and in he saw the Last Judgment.

He has also given us descriptions of Heaven.

Flowers, palaces, market-places, and churches are found there, just as with us. The angels, who were formerly human beings, lay their thoughts upon leaves, chat about domestic affairs or else on spiritual matters; and the ecclesiastical posts are assigned to those who, in their earthly career, cultivated the Holy Scripture.

As for Hell, it is filled with a nauseous smell, with hovels, heaps of filth, quagmires, and ill-clad persons.

And Pécuchet racked his brain in order to comprehend what was beautiful in these revelations. To Bouvard they seemed the delirium of an imbecile. All such matters transcend the bounds of Nature. Who, however, can know anything about them? And they surrendered themselves to the following reflections:

Jugglers can cause illusions amongst a crowd; a man with violent passions can excite other people by them; but how can the will alone act upon inert matter? A Bavarian, it is said, was able to ripen grapes; M. Gervais revived a heliotrope; one with greater power scattered the clouds at Toulouse.

It is necessary to admit an intermediary substance between the universe and ourselves? The od, a new imponderable, a sort of electricity, is perhaps nothing else. Its emissions explain the light that those who have been magnetised believe they see: the wandering flames in cemeteries, the forms of phantoms.

These images would not, therefore, be illusions, and the extraordinary gifts of persons who are possessed, like those of clairvoyants, would have a physical cause.

Whatever be their origin, there is an essence, a secret and universal agent. If we could take possession of it, there would be no need of force, of duration. That which requires ages would develop in a minute; every miracle would be practicable, and the universe would be at our disposal.

Magic springs from this eternal yearning of the human mind. Its value has no doubt been exaggerated, but it is not a falsehood. Some Orientals who are skilled in it perform prodigies. All travellers have vouched for its existence, and at the Palais Royal M. Dupotet moves with his finger the magnetic needle.

How to become magicians? This idea appeared to them foolish at first, but it returned, tormented them, and they yielded to it, even while affecting to laugh.

A course of preparation is indispensable.

In order to excite themselves the better, they kept awake at night, fasted, and, wishing to convert Germaine into a more delicate medium, they limited her diet. She indemnified herself by drinking, and consumed so much brandy that she speedily ended in becoming intoxicated. Their promenades in the corridor awakened her. She confused the noise of their footsteps with the hummings in her ears and the voices which she imagined she heard coming from the walls. One day, when she had put a plaice into the pantry, she was frightened on

seeing it covered with flame; she became worse than ever after that, and ended by believing that they had cast a spell over her.

Hoping to behold visions, they pressed the napes of each other's necks; they made themselves little bags of belladonna; finally they adopted the magic box, out of which rises a mushroom bristling with nails, to be worn over the heart by means of a ribbon attached to the breast. Everything proved unsuccessful. But they might make use of the sphere of Dupotet!

Pécuchet, with a piece of charcoal, traced on the ground a black shield, in order to enclose within its compass the animal spirits whose duty it is to assist the ambient spirits, and rejoicing at having the mastery over Bouvard, he said to him, with a pontifical air:

"I defy you to cross it!"

Bouvard viewed this circular space. Soon his heart began throbbing, his eyes became clouded.

"Ha! let us make an end of it!" And he jumped over it, to get rid of an inexpressible sense of unpleasantness.

Pécuchet, whose exultation was increasing, desired to make a corpse appear.

Under the Directory a man in the Rue de l'Échiquier exhibited the victims of the Terror. There are innumerable examples of persons coming back from the other world. Though it may be a mere appearance, what matter? The thing was to produce the effect.

The nearer to us we feel the phantom, the more promptly it responds to our appeal. But he had no relic of his family—ring, miniature, or lock of hair—while Bouvard was in a position to conjure up his father; but, as he testified a certain repugnance on the subject, Pécuchet asked him:

"What are you afraid of?"

"I? Oh! nothing at all! Do what you like."

They kept Chamberlan in their pay, and he supplied them by stealth with an old death's-head. A seamster cut out for them two long black robes with hoods attached, like monks' habits. The Falaise coach brought them a large parcel in a wrapper. Then they set about the work, the one interested in executing it, the other afraid to believe in it.

The museum was spread out like a catafalque. Three wax tapers burned at the side of the table pushed against the wall beneath the portrait of Père Bouvard, above which rose the death's-head. They had even stuffed a candle into the interior of the skull, and rays of light shot out through the two eyeholes.

In the centre, on a chafing-dish, incense was smoking. Bouvard kept in the background, and Pécuchet, turning his back to him, cast handfuls of sulphur into the fireplace.

Before invoking a corpse the consent of the demons is required. Now, this day being a Friday—a day which is assigned to Béchet—they should occupy themselves with Béchet first of all.

Bouvard, having bowed to the right and to the left, bent his chin, and raised his arms, began:

"In the names of Ethaniel, Anazin, Ischyros——"

He forgot the rest.

Pécuchet rapidly breathed forth the words, which had been jotted down on a piece of pasteboard:

"Ischyros, Athanatos, Adonaï, Sadaï, Eloy, Messiasös" (the litany was a long one), "I implore thee, I look to thee, I command thee, O Béchet!"

Then, lowering his voice:

"Where art thou, Béchet? Béchet! Béchet! Béchet!"

Bouvard sank into the armchair, and he was very pleased at not seeing Béchet, a certain instinct reproaching him with making an experiment which was a kind of sacrilege.

Where was his father's soul? Could it hear him? What if, all at once, it were about to appear?

The curtains slowly moved under the wind, which made its way in through a cracked pane of glass, and the wax-tapers caused shadows to oscillate above the corpse's skull and also above the painted face. An earthy colour made them equally brown. The cheek-bones were consumed by mouldiness, the eyes no longer possessed any lustre; but a flame shone above them in the eyeholes of the empty skull. It seemed sometimes to take the other's place, to rest on the collar of the frock-coat, to have a beard on it; and the canvas, half unfastened, swayed and palpitated.

Little by little they felt, as it were, the sensation of being touched by a breath, the approach of an impalpable being. Drops of sweat moistened Pécuchet's forehead, and Bouvard began to gnash his teeth: a cramp gripped his epigastrium; the floor, like a wave, seemed to flow under his heels; the sulphur burning in the chimney fell down in spirals. At the same moment bats flitted about. A cry arose. Who was it?

And their faces under their hoods presented such a distorted aspect that, gazing at each other, they were becoming more frightened than before, not venturing either to move or to speak, when behind the door they heard groans like those of a soul in torture.

At length they ran the risk. It was their old housekeeper, who, espying them through a slit in the partition, imagined she saw the devil, and, falling on her knees in the corridor, kept repeatedly making the sign of the Cross.

All reasoning was futile. She left them the same evening, having no desire to be employed by such people.

Germaine babbled. Chamberlan lost his place, and he formed against them a secret coalition, supported by the Abbé Jeufroy, Madame Bordin, and Foureau.

Their way of living, so unlike that of other people, gave offence. They became objects of suspicion, and even inspired a vague terror.

What destroyed them above all in public opinion was their choice of a servant. For want of another, they had taken Marcel.

His hare-lip, his hideousness, and the gibberish he talked made people avoid him. A deserted child, he had grown up, the sport of chance, in the fields, and from his long-continued privations he became possessed by an insatiable appetite. Animals that had died of disease, putrid bacon, a crushed dog—everything agreed with him so long as the piece was thick; and he was as gentle as a sheep, but utterly stupid.

Gratitude had driven him to offer himself as a servant to MM. Bouvard and Pécuchet; and then, believing that they were wizards, he hoped for extraordinary gains.

Soon after the first days of his employment with them, he confided to them a secret. On the heath of Poligny a man had formerly found an ingot of gold. The anecdote is related by the historians of Falaise; they

were ignorant of its sequel: Twelve brothers, before setting out on a voyage, had concealed twelve similar ingots along the road from Chavignolles to Bretteville, and Marcel begged of his masters to begin a search for them over again. These ingots, said they to each other, had perhaps been buried just before emigration.

This was a case for the use of the divining-rod. Its virtues are doubtful. They studied the question, however, and learned that a certain Pierre Garnier gives scientific reasons to vindicate its claims: springs and metals throw out corpuscles which have an affinity with the wood.

"This is scarcely probable. Who knows, however? Let us make the attempt."

They cut themselves a forked branch from a hazel tree, and one morning set forth to discover the treasure.

"It must be given up," said Bouvard.

"Oh, no! bless your soul!"

After they had been three hours travelling, a thought made them draw up: "The road from Chavignolles to Bretteville!—was it the old or the new road? It must be the old!"

They went back, and rushed through the neighbourhood at random, the direction of the old road not being easy to discover.

Marcel went jumping from right to left, like a spaniel running at field-sports. Bouvard was compelled to call him back every five minutes. Pécuchet advanced step by step, holding the rod by the two branches, with the point upwards. Often it seemed to him that a force and, as it were, a cramp-iron drew it towards the ground; and Marcel very rapidly made a notch in the neighbouring trees, in order to find the place later.

Pécuchet, however, slackened his pace. His mouth was open; the pupils of his eyes were contracted. Bouvard questioned him, caught hold of his shoulders, and shook him. He did not stir, and remained inert, exactly like La Barbée. Then he said he felt around his heart a kind of compression, a singular experience, arising from the rod, no doubt, and he no longer wished to touch it.

They returned next day to the place where the marks had been made on the trees. Marcel dug holes with a spade; nothing, however, came of it, and each time they felt exceedingly sheepish. Pécuchet sat down by

the side of a ditch, and while he mused, with his head raised, striving to hear the voices of the spirits through his astral body, asking himself whether he even had one, he fixed his eyes on the peak of his cap; the ecstasy of the previous day once more took possession of him. It lasted a long time, and became dreadful.

Above some oats in a by-path appeared a felt hat: it was that of M. Vaucorbeil on his mare.

Bouvard and Marcel called out to him.

The crisis was drawing to an end when the physician arrived. In order to examine Pécuchet he lifted his cap, and perceiving a forehead covered with coppery marks:

"Ha! ha! *Fructus belli!* Those are love-spots, my fine fellow! Take care of yourself. The deuce! let us not trifle with love."

Pécuchet, ashamed, again put on his cap, a sort of head-piece that swelled over a peak shaped like a half-moon, the model of which he had taken from the Atlas of Amoros.

The doctor's words astounded him. He kept thinking of them with his eyes staring before him, and suddenly had another seizure.

Vaucorbeil watched him, then, with a fillip, knocked off his cap.

Pécuchet recovered his faculties.

"I suspected as much," said the physician; "the glazed peak hypnotises you like a mirror; and this phenomenon is not rare with persons who look at a shining substance too attentively."

He pointed out how the experiment might be made on hens, then mounted his nag, and slowly disappeared from their view.

Half a league further on they noticed, in a farmyard, a pyramidal object stretched out towards the horizon. It might have been compared to an enormous bunch of black grapes marked here and there with red dots. It was, in fact, a long pole, garnished, according to the Norman custom, with cross-bars, on which were perched turkeys bridling in the sunshine.

"Let us go in." And Pécuchet accosted the farmer, who yielded to their request.

They traced a line with whiting in the middle of the press, tied down the claws of a turkey-cock, then stretched him flat on his belly, with his beak placed on the line. The fowl shut his eyes, and soon presented the

appearance of being dead. The same process was gone through with the others. Bouvard passed them quickly across to Pécuchet, who ranged them on the side on which they had become torpid.

The people about the farm-house exhibited uneasiness. The mistress screamed, and a little girl began to cry.

Bouvard loosened all the turkeys. They gradually revived; but one could not tell what might be the consequences.

At a rather tart remark of Pécuchet, the farmer grasped his pitchfork tightly.

"Clear out, in God's name, or I'll smash your head!"

They scampered off.

No matter! the problem was solved: ecstasy is dependent on material causes.

What, then, is matter? What is spirit? Whence comes the influence of the one on the other, and the reciprocal exchange of influence?

In order to inform themselves on the subject, they made researches in the works of Voltaire, Bossuet, Fénelon; and they renewed their subscription to a circulating library.

The ancient teachers were inaccessible owing to the length of their works, or the difficulty of the language; but Jouffroy and Damiron initiated them into modern philosophy, and they had authors who dealt with that of the last century.

Bouvard derived his arguments from Lamettrie, Locke, and Helvetius; Pécuchet from M. Cousin, Thomas Reid, and Gérando. The former adhered to experience; for the latter, the ideal was everything. The one belonged to the school of Aristotle, the other to that of Plato; and they proceeded to discuss the subject.

"The soul is immaterial," said Pécuchet.

"By no means," said his friend. "Lunacy, chloroform, a bleeding will overthrow it; and, inasmuch as it is not always thinking, it is not a substance which does nothing but think."

"Nevertheless," rejoined Pécuchet, "I have in myself something superior to my body, which sometimes confutes it."

"A being in a being—*homo duplex*! Look here, now! Different tendencies disclose opposite motives. That's all!"

"But this something, this soul, remains identical amid all changes from without. Therefore, it is simple, indivisible, and thus spiritual."

"If the soul were simple," replied Bouvard, "the newly-born would recollect, would imagine, like the adult. Thought, on the contrary, follows the development of the brain. As to its being indivisible, neither the perfume of a rose nor the appetite of a wolf, any more than a volition or an affirmation, is cut in two."

"That makes no difference," said Pécuchet. "The soul is exempt from the qualities of matter."

"Do you admit weight?" returned Bouvard. "Now, if matter can fall, it can in the same way think. Having had a beginning, the soul must come to an end, and as it is dependent on certain organs, it must disappear with them."

"For my part, I maintain that it is immortal. God could not intend——
"

"But if God does not exist?"

"What?" And Pécuchet gave utterance to the three Cartesian proofs: "'*Primo*: God is comprehended in the idea that we have of Him; *secundo*: Existence is possible to Him; *tertio*: How can I, a finite being, have an idea of the Infinite? And, since we have this idea, it comes to us from God; therefore, God exists.'"

He passed on to the testimony of conscience, the traditions of different races, and the need of a Creator.

"When I see a clock——"

"Yes! yes! That's a well-known argument. But where is the clockmaker's father?"

"However, a cause is necessary."

Bouvard was doubtful about causes. "From the fact that one phenomenon succeeds another phenomenon, the conclusion is drawn that it is caused by the first. Prove it."

"But the spectacle of the universe indicates an intention and a plan."

"Why? Evil is as perfectly organised as good. The worm that works its way into a sheep's head and causes it to die, is as valuable from an anatomical point of view as the sheep itself. Abnormalities surpass the normal functions. The human body could be better constructed. Three

fourths of the globe are sterile. That celestial lamp-post, the moon, does not always show itself! Do you think the ocean was destined for ships, and the wood of trees for fuel for our houses?"

Pécuchet answered: "Yet the stomach is made to digest, the leg to walk, the eye to see, although there are dyspepsias, fractures, and cataracts. No arrangements without an end. The effects came on at the exact time or at a later period. Everything depends on laws; therefore, there are final causes."

Bouvard imagined that perhaps Spinoza would furnish him with some arguments, and he wrote to Dumouchel to get him Saisset's translation.

Dumouchel sent him a copy belonging to his friend Professor Varelot, exiled on the nd of December.

Ethics terrified them with its axioms, its corollaries. They read only the pages marked with pencil, and understood this:

"'The substance is that which is of itself, by itself, without cause, without origin. This substance is God. He alone is extension, and extension is without bounds.'"

"What can it be bound with?"

"'But, though it be infinite, it is not the absolute infinite, for it contains only one kind of perfection, and the Absolute contains all.'"

They frequently stopped to think it out the better. Pécuchet took pinches of snuff, and Bouvard's face glowed with concentrated attention.

"Does this amuse you?"

"Yes, undoubtedly. Go on forever."

"'God displays Himself in an infinite number of attributes which express, each in its own way, the infinite character of His being. We know only two of them—extension and thought.

"'From thought and extension flow innumerable modes, which contain others. He who would at the same time embrace all extension and all thought would see there no contingency, nothing accidental, but a geometrical succession of terms, bound amongst themselves by necessary laws.'"

"Ah! that would be beautiful!" exclaimed Bouvard.

"'If God had a will, an end, if He acted for a cause, that would mean that He would have some want, that He would lack some one perfection. He would not be God.

"'Thus our world is but one point in the whole of things, and the universe, impenetrable by our knowledge, is a portion of an infinite number of universes emitting close to ours infinite modifications. Extension envelops our universe, but is enveloped by God, who contains in His thought all possible universes, and His thought itself is enveloped in His substance.'"

It appeared to them that this substance was filled at night with an icy coldness, carried away in an endless course towards a bottomless abyss, leaving nothing around them but the Unseizable, the Immovable, the Eternal.

This was too much for them, and they renounced it. And wishing for something less harsh, they bought the course of philosophy, by M. Guesnier, for the use of classes.

The author asks himself what would be the proper method, the ontological or the psychological.

The first suited the infancy of societies, when man directed his attention towards the external world. But at present, when he turns it in upon himself, "we believe the second to be more scientific."

The object of psychology is to study the acts which take place in our own breasts. We discover them by observation.

"Let us observe." And for a fortnight, after breakfast, they regularly searched their consciousness at random, hoping to make great discoveries there—and made none, which considerably astonished them.

"'One phenomenon occupies the ego, viz., the idea. What is its nature? It has been supposed that the objects are put into the brain, and that the brain transmits these images to our souls, which gives us the knowledge of them.'"

But if the idea is spiritual, how are we to represent matter? Thence comes scepticism as to external perceptions. If it is material, spiritual objects could not be represented. Thence scepticism as to the reality of internal notions.

"For another reason let us here be careful. This hypothesis will lead us to atheism."

For an image, being a finite thing, cannot possibly represent the Infinite.

"Yet," argued Bouvard, "when I think of a forest, of a person, of a dog, I see this forest, this person, this dog. Therefore the ideas do represent them."

And they proceeded to deal with the origin of ideas.

According to Locke, there are two originating causes—sensation and reflection; and Condillac reduces everything to sensation.

But then reflection will lack a basis. It has need of a subject, of a sentient being; and it is powerless to furnish us with the great fundamental truths: God, merit and demerit, the Just, the Beautiful—ideas which are all *innate*, that is to say, anterior to facts, and to experience, and universal.

"If they were universal we should have them from our birth."

"By this word is meant dispositions to have them; and Descartes——"

"Your Descartes is muddled, for he maintains that the fœtus possesses them, and he confesses in another place that this is in an implied fashion."

Pécuchet was astonished. "Where is this found?"

"In Gérando." And Bouvard tapped him lightly on the stomach.

"Make an end of it, then," said Pécuchet.

Then, coming to Condillac:

"'Our thoughts are not metamorphoses of sensation. It causes them, puts them in play. In order to put them in play a motive power is necessary, for matter of itself cannot produce movement.' And I found that in your Voltaire," Pécuchet added, making a low bow to him.

Thus they repeated again and again the same arguments, each treating the other's opinion with contempt, without persuading his companion that his own was right.

But philosophy elevated them in their own estimation. They recalled with disdain their agricultural and political preoccupations.

At present they were disgusted with the museum. They would have asked nothing better than to sell the articles of *virtù* contained in it. So they passed on to the second chapter: "Faculties of the Soul."

"'They are three in number, no more: that of feeling, that of knowing, and that of willing.

"'In the faculty of feeling we should distinguish physical sensibility from moral sensibility. Physical sensations are naturally classified into five species, being transmitted through the medium of the senses. The facts of moral sensibility, on the contrary, owe nothing to the body. What is there in common between the pleasure of Archimedes in discovering the laws of weight and the filthy gratification of Apicius in devouring a wild-boar's head?

"'This moral sensibility has five *genera*, and its second genus, moral desires, is divided into five species, and the phenomena of the fourth genus, affection, are subdivided into two other species, amongst which is the love of oneself—a legitimate propensity, no doubt, but one which, when it becomes exaggerated, takes the name of egoism.

"'In the faculty of knowing we find rational perception, in which there are two principal movements and four degrees.

"'Abstraction may present perils to whimsical minds.

"'Memory brings us into contact with the past, as foresight does with the future.

"'Imagination is rather a special faculty, *sui generis*.'"

So many intricacies in order to demonstrate platitudes, the pedantic tone of the author, and the monotony of his forms of expression—"We are prepared to acknowledge it," "Far from us be the thought," "Let us interrogate our consciousness"—the sempiternal eulogy on Dugald Stewart; in short, all this verbiage, disgusted them so much that, jumping over the faculty of willing, they went into logic.

It taught them the nature of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and the principal causes of our errors.

Nearly all come from the misuse of words.

"The sun is going to bed." "The weather is becoming brown," "The winter is drawing near"—vicious modes of speech which would make us believe in personal entities, when it is only a question of very simple

occurrences. "I remember such an object," "such an axiom," "such a truth"—illusion! These are ideas and not at all things which remain in me; and the rigour of language requires, "I remember such an act of my mind by which I perceived that object," "whereby I have deduced that axiom," "whereby I have admitted this truth."

As the term that describes an incident does not embrace it in all its aspects, they try to employ only abstract words, so that in place of saying, "Let us make a tour," "It is time to dine," "I have the colic," they give utterance to the following phrases: "A promenade would be salutary," "This is the hour for absorbing aliments," "I experience a necessity for disburdenment."

Once masters of logic, they passed in review the different criterions; first, that of common sense.

If the individual can know nothing, why should all individuals know more? An error, were it a hundred thousand years old, does not by the mere fact of its being old constitute truth. The multitude invariably pursues the path of routine. It is, on the contrary, the few who are guided by progress.

Is it better to trust to the evidence of the senses? They sometimes deceive, and never give information save as to externals. The innermost core escapes them.

Reason offers more safeguards, being immovable and impersonal; but in order that it may be manifested it is necessary that it should incarnate itself. Then, reason becomes my reason; a rule is of little value if it is false. Nothing can show such a rule to be right.

We are recommended to control it with the senses; but they may make the darkness thicker. From a confused sensation a defective law will be inferred, which, later, will obstruct the clear view of things.

Morality remains.

This would make God descend to the level of the useful, as if our wants were the measure of the Absolute.

As for the evidence—denied by the one, affirmed by the other—it is its own criterion. M. Cousin has demonstrated it.

"I see no longer anything but revelation," said Bouvard. "But, to believe it, it is necessary to admit two preliminary cognitions—that of

the body which has felt, and that of the intelligence which has perceived; to admit sensation and reason. Human testimonies! and consequently open to suspicion."

Pécuchet reflected—folded his arms. "But we are about to fall into the frightful abyss of scepticism."

In Bouvard's opinion it frightened only weak brains.

"Thank you for the compliment," returned Pécuchet. "However, there are indisputable facts. We can arrive at truth within a certain limit."

"Which? Do two and two always make four? Is that which is contained in some degree less than that which contains it? What is the meaning of nearly true, a fraction of God, the part of an indivisible thing?"

"Oh, you are a mere sophist!" And Pécuchet, annoyed, remained for three days in a sulk.

They employed themselves in running through the contents of several volumes. Bouvard smiled from time to time, and renewing the conversation, said:

"The fact is, it is hard to avoid doubt; thus, for the existence of God, Descartes', Kant's, and Leibnitz's proofs are not the same, and mutually destroy one another. The creation of the world by atoms, or by a spirit, remains inconceivable. I feel myself, at the same time, matter and thought, while all the time I am ignorant of what one or the other really is. Impenetrability, solidity, weight, seem to me to be mysteries just as much as my soul, and, with much stronger reason, the union of the soul and the body. In order to explain it, Leibnitz invented his harmony, Malebranche premotion, Cudworth a mediator, and Bossuet sees in it a perpetual miracle."

"Exactly," said Pécuchet. And they both confessed that they were tired of philosophy. Such a number of systems confused them. Metaphysics is of no use: one can live without it. Besides, their pecuniary embarrassments were increasing. They owed one bill to Beljambe for three hogsheads of wine, another to Langlois for two stone of sugar, a sum of one hundred francs to the tailor, and sixty to the shoemaker.

Their expenditures were continuous, of course, and meantime Maître Gouy did not pay up.

They went to Marescot to ask him to raise money for them, either by the sale of the Ecalles meadow, or by a mortgage on their farm, or by giving up their house on the condition of getting a life annuity and keeping the usufruct.

In Marescot's opinion this would be an impracticable course; but a better means might be devised, and they should be informed about it.

After this they thought of their poor garden. Bouvard undertook the pruning of the row of elms and Pécuchet the trimming of the espalier. Marcel would have to dig the borders.

At the end of a quarter of an hour they stopped. The one closed his pruning-knife, the other laid down his scissors, and they began to walk to and fro quietly, Bouvard in the shade of the linden trees, with his waistcoat off, his chest held out and his arms bare; Pécuchet close to the wall, with his head hanging down, his arms behind his back, the peak of his cap turned over his neck for precaution; and thus they proceeded in parallel lines without even seeing Marcel, who was resting at the side of the hut eating a scrap of bread.

In this reflective mood thoughts arose in their minds. They grasped at them, fearing to lose them; and metaphysics came back again—came back with respect to the rain and the sun, the gravel in their shoes, the flowers on the grass—with respect to everything. When they looked at the candle burning, they asked themselves whether the light is in the object or in our eyes. Since stars may have disappeared by the time their radiance has reached us, we admire, perhaps, things that have no existence.

Having found a Raspail cigarette in the depths of a waistcoat, they crumbled it over some water, and the camphor moved about. Here, then, is movement in matter. One degree more of movement might bring on life!

But if matter in movement were sufficient to create beings, they would not be so varied. For in the beginning lands, water, men, and plants had no existence. What, then, is this primordial matter, which we have never seen, which is no portion of created things, and which yet has produced them all?

Sometimes they wanted a book. Dumouchel, tired of assisting them, no longer answered their letters. They enthusiastically took up the new question, especially Pécuchet. His need of truth became a burning thirst.

Moved by Bouvard's preachings, he gave up spiritualism, but soon resumed it again only to abandon it once more, and, clasping his head with his hands, he would exclaim:

"Oh, doubt! doubt! I would much prefer nothingness."

Bouvard perceived the insufficiency of materialism, and tried to stop at that, declaring, however, that he had lost his head over it.

They began with arguments on a solid basis, but the basis gave way; and suddenly they had no longer a single idea—just as a bird takes wing the moment we wish to catch it.

During the winter evenings they chatted in the museum at the corner of the fire, staring at the coals. The wind, whistling in the corridor, shook the window-panes; the black masses of trees swayed to and fro, and the dreariness of the night intensified the seriousness of their thoughts.

Bouvard from time to time walked towards the further end of the apartment and then came back. The torches and the pans on the walls threw slanting shadows on the ground; and the St. Peter, seen in profile, showed on the ceiling the silhouette of his nose, resembling a monstrous hunting-horn.

They found it hard to move about amongst the various articles, and Bouvard, by not taking precautions, often knocked against the statue. With its big eyes, its drooping lip, and its air of a drunkard, it also annoyed Pécuchet. For a long time he had wished to get rid of it, but through carelessness put it off from day to day.

One evening, in the middle of a dispute on the monad, Bouvard hit his big toe against St. Peter's thumb, and turning on him in a rage, exclaimed:

"He plagues me, this jackanapes! Let us toss him out!"

It was difficult to do this over the staircase. They flung open the window, and gently tried to tip St. Peter over the edge. Pécuchet, on his knees, attempted to raise his heels, while Bouvard pressed against his shoulders. The old codger in stone did not budge. After this they had

recourse to the halberd as a lever, and finally succeeded in stretching him out quite straight. Then, after a see-saw motion, he dashed into the open space, his tiara going before him. A heavy crash reached their ears, and next day they found him broken into a dozen pieces in the old pit for composts.

An hour afterwards the notary came in, bringing good news to them. A lady in the neighbourhood was willing to advance a thousand crown-pieces on the security of a mortgage of their farm, and, as they were expressing their satisfaction at the proposal:

"Pardon me. She adds, as a condition, that you should sell her the Ecalles meadow for fifteen hundred francs. The loan will be advanced this very day. The money is in my office."

They were both disposed to give way.

Bouvard ended by saying: "Good God! be it so, then."

"Agreed," said Marescot. And then he mentioned the lender's name: it was Madame Bordin.

"I suspected 'twas she!" exclaimed Pécuchet.

Bouvard, who felt humiliated, had not a word to say.

She or some one else—what did it matter? The principal thing was to get out of their difficulties.

When they received the money (they were to get the sum for the Ecalles later) they immediately paid all their bills; and they were returning to their abode when, at the corner of the market-place, they were stopped by Farmer Gouy.

He had been on his way to their house to apprise them of a misfortune. The wind, the night before, had blown down twenty apple trees into the farmyard, overturned the boilery, and carried away the roof of the barn.

They spent the remainder of the afternoon in estimating the amount of the damage, and they continued the inquiry on the following day with the assistance of the carpenter, the mason, and the slater. The repairs would cost at least about eighteen hundred francs.

Then, in the evening, Gouy presented himself. Marianne herself had, a short time before, told him all about the sale of the Ecalles meadow—a piece of land with a splendid yield, suitable in every way, and scarcely

requiring any cultivation at all, the best bit in the whole farm!—and he asked for a reduction.

The two gentlemen refused it. The matter was submitted to the justice of the peace, who decided in favour of the farmer. The loss of the Ecalles, which was valued at two thousand francs per acre, caused him an annual depreciation of seventy, and he was sure to win in the courts.

Their fortune was diminished. What were they to do? And soon the question would be, How were they to live?

They both sat down to table full of discouragement. Marcel knew nothing about it in the kitchen. His dinner this time was better than theirs.

The soup was like dish-water, the rabbit had a bad smell, the kidney-beans were underdone, the plates were dirty, and at dessert Bouvard burst into a passion and threatened to break everything on Marcel's head.

"Let us be philosophers," said Pécuchet. "A little less money, the intrigues of a woman, the clumsiness of a servant—what is it but this? You are too much immersed in matter."

"But when it annoys me?" said Bouvard.

"For my part, I don't admit it," rejoined Pécuchet.

He had recently been reading an analysis of Berkeley, and added:

"I deny extension, time, space, even substance! for the true substance is the mind-perceiving qualities."

"Quite so," said Bouvard; "but get rid of the world, and you'll have no proof left of God's existence."

Pécuchet uttered a cry, and a long one too, although he had a cold in his head, caused by the iodine of potassium, and a continual feverishness increased his excitement. Bouvard, being uneasy about him, sent for the doctor.

Vaucorbeil ordered orange-syrup with the iodine, and for a later stage cinnabar baths.

"What's the use?" replied Pécuchet. "One day or another the form will die out. The essence does not perish."

"No doubt," said the physician, "matter is indestructible. However—__"

"Ah, no!—ah, no! The indestructible thing is being. This body which is there before me—yours, doctor—prevents me from knowing your real self, and is, so to speak, only a garment, or rather a mask."

Vaucorbeil believed he was mad.

"Good evening. Take care of your mask."

Pécuchet did not stop. He procured an introduction to the Hegelian philosophy, and wished to explain it to Bouvard.

"All that is rational is real. There is not even any reality save the idea. The laws of the mind are laws of the universe; the reason of man is identical with that of God."

Bouvard pretended to understand.

"Therefore the absolute is, at the same time, the subject and the object, the unity whereby all differences come to be settled. Thus, things that are contradictory are reconciled. The shadow permits the light; heat and cold intermingled produce temperature. Organism maintains itself only by the destruction of organism; everywhere there is a principle that disunites, a principle that connects."

They were on the hillock, and the curé was walking past the gateway with his breviary in his hand.

Pécuchet asked him to come in, as he desired to finish the explanation of Hegel, and to get some notion of what the curé would say about it.

The man of the cassock sat down beside them, and Pécuchet broached the question of Christianity.

"No religion has established this truth so well: 'Nature is but a moment of the idea.'"

"A moment of the idea!" murmured the priest in astonishment.

"Why, yes. God in taking a visible envelope showed his consubstantial union with it."

"With nature—oh! oh!"

"By His decease He bore testimony to the essence of death; therefore, death was in Him, made and makes part of God."

The ecclesiastic frowned.

"No blasphemies! it was for the salvation of the human race that He endured sufferings."

"Error! We look at death in the case of the individual, where, no doubt, it is a calamity; but with relation to things it is different. Do not separate mind from matter."

"However, sir, before the Creation——"

"There was no Creation. It has always existed. Otherwise this would be a new being adding itself to the Divine idea, which is absurd."

The priest arose; business matters called him elsewhere.

"I flatter myself I've floored him!" said Pécuchet. "One word more. Since the existence of the world is but a continual passage from life to death, and from death to life, so far from everything existing, nothing is. But everything is becoming—do you understand?"

"Yes; I do understand—or rather I don't."

Idealism in the end exasperated Bouvard.

"I don't want any more of it. The famous *cogito* stupefies me. Ideas of things are taken for the things themselves. What we understand very slightly is explained by means of words which we don't understand at all—substance, extension, force, matter, and soul. So much abstraction, imagination. As for God, it is impossible to know in what way He is, if He is at all. Formerly, He used to cause the wind, the thunderstorms, revolutions. At present, He is diminishing. Besides, I don't see the utility of Him."

"And morality—in this state of affairs."

"Ah! so much the worse."

"It lacks a foundation in fact," said Pécuchet.

And he remained silent, driven into a corner by premises which he had himself laid down. It was a surprise—a crushing bit of logic.

Bouvard no longer even believed in matter.

The certainty that nothing exists (deplorable though it may be) is none the less a certainty. Few persons are capable of possessing it. This transcendency on their part inspired them with pride, and they would have liked to make a display of it. An opportunity presented itself.

One morning, while they were going to buy tobacco, they saw a crowd in front of Langlois' door. The public conveyance from Falaise was surrounded, and there was much excitement about a convict named Touache, who was wandering about the country. The conductor had met

him at Croix-Verte between two gendarmes, and the people of Chavignolles breathed a sigh of relief.

Girbal and the captain remained on the green; then the justice of the peace made his appearance, curious to obtain information, and after him came M. Marescot in a velvet cap and sheepskin slippers.

Langlois invited them to honour his shop with their presence; they would be more at their ease; and in spite of the customers and the loud ringing of the bell, the gentlemen continued their discussion as to Touache's offences.

"Goodness gracious!" said Bouvard, "he had bad instincts. That was the whole of it!"

"They are conquered by virtue," replied the notary.

"But if a person has not virtue?"

And Bouvard positively denied free-will.

"Yet," said the captain, "I can do what I like. I am free, for instance, to move my leg."

"No, sir, for you have a motive for moving it."

The captain looked out for something to say in reply, and found nothing. But Girbal discharged this shaft:

"A Republican speaking against liberty. That is funny."

"A droll story," chimed in Langlois.

Bouvard turned on him with this question:

"Why don't you give all you possess to the poor?"

The grocer cast an uneasy glance over his entire shop.

"Look here, now, I'm not such an idiot! I keep it for myself."

"If you were St. Vincent de Paul, you would act differently, since you would have his character. You obey your own. Therefore, you are not free."

"That's a quibble!" replied the company in chorus.

Bouvard did not flinch, and said, pointing towards the scales on the counter:

"It will remain motionless so long as each scale is empty. So with the will; and the oscillation of the scales between two weights which seem equal represents the strain on our mind when it is hesitating between

different motives, till the moment when the more powerful motive gets the better of it and leads it to a determination."

"All that," said Girbal, "makes no difference for Touache, and does not prevent him from being a downright vicious rogue."

Pécuchet addressed the company:

"Vices are properties of Nature, like floods, tempests."

The notary stopped, and raising himself on tiptoe at every word:

"I consider your system one of complete immorality. It gives scope to every kind of excess, excuses crimes, and declares the guilty innocent."

"Exactly," replied Bouvard; "the wretch who follows his appetites is right from his own point of view just as much as the honest man who listens to reason."

"Do not defend monsters!"

"Wherefore monsters? When a person is born blind, an idiot, a homicide, this appears to us to be opposed to order, as if order were known to us, as if Nature were striving towards an end."

"You then raise a question about Providence?"

"I do raise a question about it."

"Look rather to history," exclaimed Pécuchet. "Recall to mind the assassinations of kings, the massacres amongst peoples, the dissensions in families, the affliction of individuals."

"And at the same time," added Bouvard, for they mutually excited each other, "this Providence takes care of little birds, and makes the claws of crayfishes grow again. Oh! if by Providence you mean a law which rules everything, I am of the same opinion, and even more so."

"However, sir," said the notary, "there are principles."

"What stuff is that you're talking? A science, according to Condillac, is so much the better the less need it has of them. They do nothing but summarise acquired knowledge, and they bring us back to those conceptions which are exactly the disputable ones."

"Have you, like us," went on Pécuchet, "scrutinised and explored the arcana of metaphysics?"

"It is true, gentlemen—it is true!"

Then the company broke up.

But Coulon, drawing them aside, told them in a paternal tone that he was no devotee certainly, and that he even hated the Jesuits. However, he did not go as far as they did. Oh, no! certainly not. And at the corner of the green they passed in front of the captain, who, as he lighted his pipe, growled:

"All the same, I do what I like, by God!"

Bouvard and Pécuchet gave utterance on other occasions to their scandalous paradoxes. They threw doubt on the honesty of men, the chastity of women, the intelligence of government, the good sense of the people—in short, they sapped the foundations of everything.

Foureau was provoked by their behaviour, and threatened them with imprisonment if they went on with such discourses.

The evidence of their own superiority caused them pain. As they maintained immoral propositions, they must needs be immoral: calumnies were invented about them. Then a pitiable faculty developed itself in their minds, that of observing stupidity and no longer tolerating it. Trifling things made them feel sad: the advertisements in the newspapers, the profile of a shopkeeper, an idiotic remark overheard by chance. Thinking over what was said in their own village, and on the fact that there were even as far as the Antipodes other Coulons, other Marescots, other Foureaus, they felt, as it were, the heaviness of all the earth weighing down upon them.

They no longer went out of doors, and received no visitors.

One afternoon a dialogue arose, outside the front entrance, between Marcel and a gentleman who wore dark spectacles and a hat with a large brim. It was the academician Larsoneur. He observed a curtain half-opening and doors being shut. This step on his part was an attempt at reconciliation; and he went away in a rage, directing the man-servant to tell his masters that he regarded them as a pair of common fellows.

Bouvard and Pécuchet did not care about this. The world was diminishing in importance, and they saw it as if through a cloud that had descended from their brains over their eyes.

Is it not, moreover, an illusion, a bad dream? Perhaps, on the whole, prosperity and misfortune are equally balanced. But the welfare of the species does not console the individual.

"And what do others matter to me?" said Pécuchet.

His despair afflicted Bouvard. It was he who had brought his friend to this pass, and the ruinous condition of their house kept their grief fresh by daily irritations.

In order to revive their spirits they tried discussions, and prescribed tasks for themselves, but speedily fell back into greater sluggishness, into more profound discouragement.

At the end of each meal they would remain with their elbows on the table groaning with a lugubrious air.

Marcel would give them a scared look, and then go back to his kitchen, where he stuffed himself in solitude.

About the middle of midsummer they received a circular announcing the marriage of Dumouchel with Madame Olympe-Zulma Poulet, a widow.

"God bless him!"

And they recalled the time when they were happy.

Why were they no longer following the harvesters? Where were the days when they went through the different farm-houses looking everywhere for antiquities? Nothing now gave them such hours of delight as those which were occupied with the distillery and with literature. A gulf lay between them and that time. It was irrevocable.

They thought of taking a walk as of yore through the fields, wandered too far, and got lost. The sky was dotted with little fleecy clouds, the wind was shaking the tiny bells of the oats; a stream was purling along through a meadow—and then, all at once, an infectious odour made them halt, and they saw on the pebbles between the thorn trees the putrid carcass of a dog.

The four limbs were dried up. The grinning jaws disclosed teeth of ivory under the bluish lips; in place of the stomach there was a mass of earth-coloured flesh which seemed to be palpitating with the vermin that swarmed all over it. It writhed, with the sun's rays falling on it, under the gnawing of so many mouths, in this intolerable stench—a stench which was fierce and, as it were, devouring.

Yet wrinkles gathered on Bouvard's forehead, and his eyes filled with tears.

Pécuchet said in a stoical fashion, "One day we shall be like that."

The idea of death had taken hold of them. They talked about it on their way back.

After all, it has no existence. We pass away into the dew, into the breeze, into the stars. We become part of the sap of trees, the brilliance of precious stones, the plumage of birds. We give back to Nature what she lent to each of us, and the nothingness before us is not a bit more frightful than the nothingness behind us.

They tried to picture it to themselves under the form of an intense night, a bottomless pit, a continual swoon. Anything would be better than such an existence—monotonous, absurd, and hopeless.

They enumerated their unsatisfied wants. Bouvard had always wished for horses, equipages, a big supply of Burgundy, and lovely women ready to accommodate him in a splendid habitation. Pécuchet's ambition was philosophical knowledge. Now, the vastest of problems, that which contains all others, can be solved in one minute. When would it come, then? "As well to make an end of it at once."

"Just as you like," said Bouvard.

And they investigated the question of suicide.

Where is the evil of casting aside a burden which is crushing you? and of doing an act harmful to nobody? If it offended God, should we have this power? It is not cowardice, though people say so, and to scoff at human pride is a fine thing, even at the price of injury to oneself—the thing that men regard most highly.

They deliberated as to the different kinds of death. Poison makes you suffer. In order to cut your throat you require too much courage. In the case of asphyxia, people often fail to effect their object.

Finally, Pécuchet carried up to the garret two ropes belonging to their gymnastic apparatus. Then, having fastened them to the same cross-beam of the roof, he let a slip-knot hang down from the end of each, and drew two chairs underneath to reach the ropes.

This method was the one they selected.

They asked themselves what impression it would cause in the district, what would become of their library, their papers, their collections. The thought of death made them feel tenderly about themselves. However,

they did not abandon their project, and by dint of talking about it they grew accustomed to the idea.

On the evening of the th of December, between ten and eleven o'clock, they sat thinking in the museum, both differently attired. Bouvard wore a blouse over his knitted waistcoat, and Pécuchet, through economy, had not left off his monk's habit for the past three months.

As they were very hungry (for Marcel, having gone out at daybreak, had not reappeared), Bouvard thought it would be a healthful thing for him to drink a quart bottle of brandy, and for Pécuchet to take some tea.

While he was lifting up the kettle he spilled some water on the floor.

"Awkward!" exclaimed Bouvard.

Then, thinking the infusion too small, he wanted to strengthen it with two additional spoonfuls.

"This will be execrable," said Pécuchet.

"Not at all."

And while each of them was trying to draw the work-box closer to himself, the tray upset and fell down. One of the cups was smashed—the last of their fine porcelain tea-service.

Bouvard turned pale.

"Go on! Confusion! Don't put yourself about!"

"Truly, a great misfortune! I attribute it to my father."

"Your natural father," corrected Pécuchet, with a sneer.

"Ha! you insult me!"

"No; but I am tiring you out! I see it plainly! Confess it!"

And Pécuchet was seized with anger, or rather with madness. So was Bouvard. The pair began shrieking, the one excited by hunger, the other by alcohol. Pécuchet's throat at length emitted no sound save a rattling.

"It is infernal, a life like this. I much prefer death. Adieu!"

He snatched up the candlestick and rushed out, slamming the door behind him.

Bouvard, plunged in darkness, found some difficulty in opening it. He ran after Pécuchet, and followed him up to the garret.

The candle was on the floor, and Pécuchet was standing on one of the chairs, with a rope in his hand. The spirit of imitation got the better of Bouvard.

"Wait for me!"

And he had just got up on the other chair when, suddenly stopping:

"Why, we have not made our wills!"

"Hold on! That's quite true!"

Their breasts swelled with sobs. They leaned against the skylight to take breath.

The air was chilly and a multitude of stars glittered in a sky of inky blackness.

The whiteness of the snow that covered the earth was lost in the haze of the horizon.

They perceived, close to the ground, little lights, which, as they drew near, looked larger, all reaching up to the side of the church.

Curiosity drove them to the spot. It was the midnight mass. These lights came from shepherds' lanterns. Some of them were shaking their cloaks under the porch.

The serpent snorted; the incense smoked. Glasses suspended along the nave represented three crowns of many-coloured flames; and, at the end of the perspective at the two sides of the tabernacle, immense wax tapers were pointed with red flames. Above the heads of the crowd and the broad-brimmed hats of the women, beyond the chanters, the priest could be distinguished in his chasuble of gold. To his sharp voice responded the strong voices of the men who filled up the gallery, and the wooden vault quivered above its stone arches. The walls were decorated with the stations of the Cross. In the midst of the choir, before the altar, a lamb was lying down, with its feet under its belly and its ears erect.

The warm temperature imparted to them both a strange feeling of comfort, and their thoughts, which had been so tempestuous only a short time before, became peaceful, like waves when they are calmed.

They listened to the Gospel and the *Credo*, and watched the movements of the priest. Meanwhile, the old, the young, the beggar women in rags, the mothers in high caps, the strong young fellows with tufts of fair down on their faces, were all praying, absorbed in the same deep joy, and saw the body of the Infant Christ shining, like a sun, upon the straw of a stable. This faith on the part of others touched Bouvard in spite of his reason, and Pécuchet in spite of the hardness of his heart.

There was a silence; every back was bent, and, at the tinkling of a bell, the little lamb bleated.

The host was displayed by the priest, as high as possible between his two hands. Then burst forth a strain of gladness inviting the whole world to the feet of the King of Angels. Bouvard and Pécuchet involuntarily joined in it, and they felt, as it were, a new dawn rising in their souls.